Improving stakeholder communication in a network organization

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Abstract

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This thesis focuses on the stakeholder communication of the Team Finland network. The stakeholder group in this research is the Finnish small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) seeking internationalization. The chosen channel is newsletter. This thesis comprehends Team Finland network as an organization, and therefore does not focus on the stakeholder communication of the different network organizations. As this is a commissioned research, the thesis does not focus on other communication channels than the agreed newsletter.

The literature review presents the key concepts and terms relating to the research topic. Corporate communication, stakeholder communication and specifics of a network organization are explained in more detail as they are the main concepts of this thesis.

The research method was case study. It was seen as a good method since the purpose was to gain a full understanding on how the different organizations present the Team Finland network as a whole in their newsletters, how the different newsletters are produced, and to find ways to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters.

The findings of this research reveal that the network has not reached its full potential in the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the different newsletters and in the production process of the newsletters.

In the end, some suggestions, based on the research, on how to improve the implementation of the Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters, are presented.

Keywords

Stakeholder communication, case study, newsletter, network organization, Team Finland

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1 Introduction

In 2012, the Team Finland network was established to bring together all state-funded actors and services they offer to promote the internationalization of the Finnish small and medium-sized enterprises. The purpose of the network is also to attract foreign investments to Finland, and to promote Finland's country brand. (Team Finland 2015.)

According to the SME Barometer published in spring 2015, only 3 percent of the respondents (altogether 4400 respondents) were aware of the Team Finland services, 14 percent knew something, and 83 percent of the respondents did not know about the Team Finland services or cannot say as can be seen in the Figure 1 (See Figure 1; Suomen Yrittäjät 2015, 27). One of the main reasons to form the network was to help the Finnish SMEs to find the scattered internationalization services different state-funded organizations are providing (Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 16.5.2012, 8). The SME Barometer results indicate that the Team Finland network has not succeeded in communicating about itself to its relevant stakeholder groups.

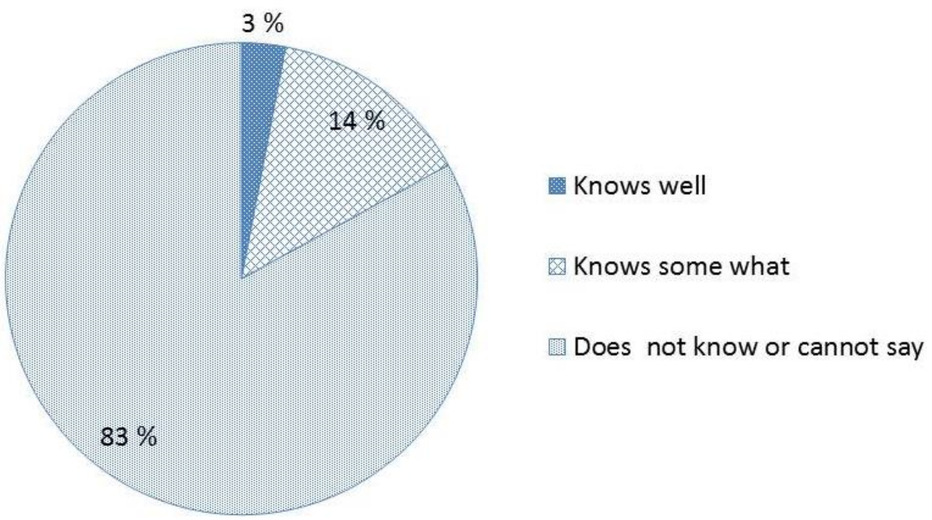

Figure 1: The awareness of Team Finland services (Suomen Yrittäjät 2015, 27)

Communication with customers, suppliers, partners and other so called stakeholders can take many forms and use many different channels. This thesis, commissioned by the Prime Minister's Office, aims at improving the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication. Different network organizations have their own stakeholder groups and use different channels to communicate with them. This thesis focuses on one of the stakeholder groups of the Team Finland network, the SEMs seeking internationalization. Newsletter is the chosen channel and a tool since all of the network's organizations are publishing newsletters which are targeted to that specific stakeholder group.

This thesis starts by describing the evolvement of the Team Finland network, followed by an overview of the network, its services and communication. The introductory part ends with the explanation of the needs and objectives for this thesis. In literature review, the key communication and other concepts related to the research are described and discussed in relation to the research topic. The following chapter explains how the research was conducted, addresses the validity and the reliability of the research, and gives an overview on the preliminary suggestions to improve the implementation of the Team Finland network's stakeholder communication in the different newsletters. The findings of the research process are explained in the Findings chapter. This thesis ends with Conclusions chapter in which the researcher recaps the main research questions, and presents the revised further development ideas to improve the implementation of the stakeholder communication in the Team Finland network's newsletters.

2 Topic introduction

This chapter focuses on the evolution process of the Team Finland network and presents the current network. In the end of this chapter, the needs and the objectives for this research are discussed.

2.1 History

In the beginning of 21st century, it became obvious that the importance of external economic relations had increased, and that the success of Finland was partly dependent on the international success of Finnish companies. It was also understood that companies needed government's help in their internationalization processes, especially in regions outside Europe and the USA. It was noted that the services the state provided were scattered and this did not serve the Finnish small and medium-sized enterprises (later referred as SMEs) the best way. (Team Finland 2015; VKE-toimikunnan mietintö 30.9.2001, 5–6.)

In December 2000, the Ministry of Trade and Industry appointed a Committee chaired by Mr Christoffer Taxell to find out ways to develop the internationalization of Finnish companies and to promote export efforts. In October 2001, the Committee suggested that the state-funded organizations offering internationalization services should start to cooperate, and that a national export strategy should be formed. (Helsingin Sanomat 10.10.2001; VKE-toimikunnan mietintö 30.9.2001, 5.)

In 2002, the Ministry of Trade and Industry appointed Export Forum (Vientifoorumi) to create the national strategy for promotion of export and internationalization of Finnish companies. The strategy was launched in December 2004. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 10.12.2004; Ministry of Trade and Industry 2004; Valtiontilintarkastajien kertomus 2005, 17.) In April 2005, The Ministry for Foreign Affairs launched its own strategy for promotion of export and internationalization (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 11.4.2005). The purpose of this strategy was to operationalize the national strategy in the field of foreign services (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2005, 3). The national strategy was revised in 2007 (Ministry of Trade and Industry 2007). The Export Forum started a new strategy process in 2010 which aimed at revising the national strategy. The strategy was not completed because the Forum's mandate terminated at the end of the Government's term of office in 2011. Instead, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy published guidelines based on the strategy work. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 2011, 2.)

The Government Programme of 2011 was the starting point for the forming of the network (Pääministeri Jyrki Kataisen hallitusohjelma 2011, 21). Two independent studies were launched. The first one focused on the state-funded organizations operating abroad, and the second one focused on the state-funded organizations' operations in Finland (OKM, TEM & UM 2012; Taloudellisten ulkosuhteiden työryhmä 2012). The results were handed over to the Government in early 2012. The formation of Team Finland network is based on a combination of these two studies. The internationalization of Finnish companies, the importance to attract investments to Finland, and the promotion of Finland's country brand to encourage foreign actors to select Finland, Finnish expertise and Finnish products, had become important issues, and the forming of the network had a strong support in the Government. It was also seen that with the network based approach the usage of public funds would be better coordinated. (OKM, TEM & UM 2012, 4.)

After these two separate studies were handed over to the Government, building up the network progressed rapidly. The Team Finland Action Plan was approved by the Government in spring 2012 (Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 16.5.2012), and the Steering group appointed in August the same year. The External Economic Relations Unit was formed in the Prime Minister's Office, and shortly after that, teams of regional Team Finland actors were set up abroad. (Team Finland 2015.)

In March 2012, Mr Mikko Kosonen, the President of Sitra and Mr Matti Alahuhta, the President of Kone, wrote in a joint article published in the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat that by forming the Team Finland network all the state-funded organizations providing internationalization services will start working on customer-oriented way to reach a common goal. (Kosonen & Alahuhta 2012.)

In May 2012, the Government discussed the Team Finland Action Plan in its evening school. After the evening school, Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen stated that to develop Finland's external economic relations calls for seamless cooperation between different actors. At the same event, Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade, Alexander Stubb, also stated that to guarantee jobs in Finland we need internationally successful companies. (Government Communications Department 2012.)

The President of the Republic, Sauli Niinistö, also pointed out in his speech held in 11 September 2012 that Finland's current service network is good, but tighter cooperation is needed between the state-funded organizations so that the SMEs seeking the internationalization services can find them easily (Office of the President of the Republic of Finland 2012). In December 2012, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Erkki Tuomioja, stated that the Team Finland network will make to cooperation of Finnish actors abroad stronger (Suomen Yrittäjät 2012).

The Government Programme of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä (VNK 2015, 38) also emphasizes the importance of the Team Finland network in connection with the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises and measures to attract investments to Finland.

2.2 The Team Finland network

Team Finland is a network which brings together all state-funded actors and internationalization services they offer. The core of Team Finland network consists of the Prime Minister's Office (later referred as VNK), the Ministry of Employment and the Economy (later referred as TEM), the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (later referred as UM), the Ministry of Education and Culture (later referred as OKM), and the state-funded organizations, and service points abroad operating under their guidance: Finpro, Tekes, Finnvera, Finnfund, Finnpartnership, Finnish Industry Investment, VTT, the Finnish Patent and Registration Office (later referred as PRH), the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (later referred as ELY Centres), Finland's cultural and academic institutes, the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce, and the Finnish-Swedish Chamber of Commerce. (Team Finland 2015.)

The Team Finland network abroad consists of 80 local teams. In Finland, the regional Team Finland network is based on 15 teams formed by the ELY Centres. The Team Finland network also works closely together with companies, organizations and universities. (Team Finland 2015.)

The Figure 2 illustrates how the division of labour in the Team Finland network is structured (See Figure 2). The Team Finland network is steered by the Government. The Government draws up yearly strategic guidelines. Prime Minister chairs the Steering Group which defines the policy lines. The Steering Group meets four times a year and the group consists of members from the Team Finland organizations and influential business and industry leaders. This combination ensures the interaction between the Government and the corporate world. (Team Finland 2015.)

The practical work of the network is guided by the Board of Directors which holds monthly meetings. The Board is responsible for implementing the guidelines set by the Steering Group. The Board consists of members from the key ministries and organizations which provide the actual services for the network's customers. The so-called extended Board meets four to six of times per year. Those meetings have participants also from the other

Team Finland network partners such as the chambers of commerce, regional development agencies, and business organizations. (Team Finland 2015.)

The External Economics Relations Unit in the Prime Minister's Office acts as the Secretariat for the Team Finland network. The Unit is responsible for coordinating the work of the network, and it also prepares for the matters concerning the steering and strategic guidelines. (Team Finland 2015.)

Figure 2: The Team Finland network

Team Finland budget

In 2012, the Government stated in its Resolution on the Action Plan on External Economic Relations that the Team Finland network does not receive additional funding from the state budget. It was agreed that ministries allocate required resources to Team Finland operations from their own operating expenses. The organizations are also required to report on a yearly basis to the Steering Group about the Team Finland strategy implementation in their own field of operation. (Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 16.5.2012, 10.)

Team Finland strategy

The Team Finland strategy was launched in June 2013. The strategy aimed at building a network which would bring all parties involved under the Team Finland brand and to create a customer driven operating model. One of the objectives was to offer a full service package to the Finnish SMEs seeking internationalization services (VNK 2013, 17).

Although the internationalization services are available to all SMEs, the Government defined seven thematic priorities for the internationalization services. Those are: 1) Cleantech, 2) Bioeconomy, 3) ICT and digitalisation, 4) Life sciences, health care and foods, 5)

Arctic competence, 6) Creative industries and design, and 7) Education and learning. The purpose of the prioritising is to address network's attention to the segments which show the greatest potential. (Ibid., 11.) The strategy was updated in 2014. The updated strategy document defined the six service areas of Team Finland network which are at the heart of the network's operations. (VNK 2014, 13.) The strategy update also stated that the customer communication about the different services should be enhanced (Ibid., 19.)

The Government decided in its plenary session on 30 December 2015 to reduce the current number of different strategies from 127 to 67. It was agreed that the updated Team Finland strategy 2015 is still relevant, but in the future the Team Finland activities will be a part of the Strategic Government Programme Action Plan. (Government Communications Department 2015.) The Government updated its Strategic Government Programme Action Plan in April 2016, and making the Team Finland model operate more effectively has a central role in the Plan (Team Finland 15.4.2016).

Team Finland services and other priorities

The Team Finland network offers companies seeking internationalization several services. The internationalization services are the first priority of the network. The services have been grouped into six service areas as stated in the Team Finland Strategy Update 2015 (VNK 2014, 13). Information regarding all of the different services the network's organizations are providing is gathered under six headings to Team Finland website as can be seen in Figure 3: Market opportunities, Advice and training, Financing, Official contacts, Networks, and Visibility. These services are provided by the state-funded organizations and service points, and some of the services are free of charge for the SMEs. (See Figure 3; Team Finland 2015.)

Figure 3: The Team Finland network's services

The Team Finland network organizations collect and analyse financial and societal information on the world markets. By using these services a company can weigh up the prospects of the business or product in various countries. Network organizations also assist companies in planning their internationalization, or help with practical issues, and offer a wide range of financing services, from aid and grants to loans and guarantees. (Team Finland 2015.)

In some countries, the government involvement is needed to open doors for companies, and sometimes business partners are needed to boost the internationalization. The Team Finland network organizations help companies make the needed contacts with the local public authorities. If a partner is needed, the Team Finland network can help to find the ideal partner for business or research purposes. It is also possible for a company to participate in a Team Finland trade mission or hire premises at Finnish missions abroad for various representative functions. The Team Finland network organizations can help to make media contacts abroad. (Team Finland 2015.)

The Team Finland network's second priority is to attract investments to Finland. Invest in Finland is responsible for carrying out that priority. The main tasks include providing information on Finland as an investment target, and developing and coordinating the attraction of foreign investments to Finland. The third priority of network is to promote Finland's country brand. The Finland Promotion Board is responsible for coordinating country brand communications. The Board brings together all state-funded bodies carrying out country brand promotion, and is responsible for setting the annual themes for the country brand communications. *This is Finland* website is the official site for Finland's country brand. It contains e.g. articles in several languages about Finland. (Team Finland 2015.)

2.3 Network's communication

This subchapter begins with explaining the specifics of central government communications as the network consists of state-funded organizations. The subchapter also describes the Team Finland network's communication now and explains the future plans for the development of the network's communication function.

Central government communications

The Team Finland network consists of state-funded organizations. The central government communication is guided by the Central Government Communications Guidelines published by the Prime Minister's Office in 2010 (Prime Minister's Office 2010). The different Team Finland network organizations have their own communication strategies and guidelines to support their specific objectivities. Those strategies and guidelines rely on the main objectives of the central government communications.

According to the Central Government Communications Guidelines (2010), the central government communication should have the following objectives: openness, public service, participation, and interaction. The communication should also be efficient and effective. (Prime Minister's Office 2010, 12.) The Team Finland network's communication should also follow these guidelines and objectives.

Communication function

Each of the network's organizations has their own communication functions which carry out the communication activities. They all follow their own communication strategies and guidelines. The network's organizations are required to take the Team Finland communication in account when planning their own communication activities. They are also responsible for creating content for Team Finland organizations' own channels, identifying opportunities for communication cooperation and participating in meetings in which the communication activities are discussed and decisions made. (Team Finland 2016b.)

Team Finland network's communication is coordinated by the Team Finland Communication Team which operates in the Prime Minister's Office's External Economic Relations Unit. The Communication Team is responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing the network's joint external and internal communications. They are also responsible for supporting the Team Finland organisations in their communication as well as creating joint tools. They are also in charge of the team.finland.fi-website and network's social media channels. (Team Finland 2016b.)

Communication plays a key role when promoting the network and the services it offers to the SMEs seeking internationalization, and in the implementation of Team Finland strategy. It is also one of the elements which hold the network organization together. Coordinated key messages and visible Team Finland elements used in the network organizations' own communications channels create awareness of the Team Finland network and make the full service range of the network known to the SMEs, and thus promote Team Finland brand.

Communication guidelines

The Team Finland network has its own communication guidelines which were initially drafted by the Team Finland Communications Team. The guidelines are approved by the by the Communications officers' meeting. The Communications officers' meeting has members from all of the network's organizations and they meet every other month or more frequently if necessary. The communication guidelines are updated when there is a need for an update. The most recent update was in spring 2016.

The guidelines define the principles of network's communication, the communication goals, target groups, key messages, operating model and division of tasks, and internal and external communication. The basic guidelines on the use of the Team Finland logo are also shortly presented. Additional information regarding the guidelines is available in the network's intranet. (Ibid.)

In Team Finland Strategy Update 2015 it was stated that the Team Finland network's customer communication should be enhanced (VNK 2014, 20). The communication guidelines define five key messages to be used in Team Finland's customer communication. Those are:

1. Team Finland helps companies to go global.
2. We bring together all-state-financed internationalisation services.
3. We provide information about opportunities on different markets, guidance during the various stages of internationalisation, financing, and support in creating networks, social relations and visibility.
4. You can reach us all with one contact.
5. Contact us and we'll investigate how we can help your company.

The key messages should be used in network organization's own communication materials. By communicating effectively about Team Finland services, the most important stakeholder group, the SMEs seeking internationalization, will became aware of the full service range and find them easily. (Team Finland 2016b.)

According to the guidelines, communication is an important part of Team Finland activities and the strategy implementation. Team Finland communication supports the network's activities by strong visual identity (brand) and unified communication. The guidelines also state that the Team Finland communication should present the network as a transparent whole. (Ibid.)

Network's future outlook

In fall 2016, the Team Finland house will be formed when four of the network's organizations move under the same roof in Ruoholahti, Helsinki. Finpro, Tekes and Finnvera will move to the premises in fall 2016, and Finnish Industry Investment in 2017. The premises in Ruoholahti will also have joint working spaces for Team Finland actors currently working in TEM, UM, and VNK. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy 17.12.2014.) As the four organizations move under the same roof, it is a good starting point to unify the network's communication. Common premises make the customer service better as the services can be reached from one point. The Government also stated in its updated Strategic Government Programme Action Plan that by combining the external communications and other supporting functions, it is possible to grow the visibility of the Team Finland network and its services, and to achieve cost savings. (VNK 2016, 13.)

The Communications officers' meeting has decided that the following five communication functions will be combined in the future:

1) Marketing and communication directed to companies
2) Public and stakeholder relations
3) Internal communication and training
4) Procurement and partners
5) Country brand communications. (Brander 19 October 2015.)

The communication departments of the network organizations will remain independent but the different above mentioned functions will be carried out in cooperation and in virtual teams. Each team has members from different organizations and a team leader who is responsible for the work carried out in the team. In addition, each communication director from the four organizations who move to Ruoholahti together with Ms Mari-Kaisa Brander from VNK are responsible for one of the teams. Communication directors form an executive team which holds weekly meetings to ensure common vision and that the supervisor relationship will remain. (Brander 19 October 2015.)

Team Finland communication should be aligned and the message should remain the same regardless of the sender (Brander 19 October 2015). As stated in the Team Finland Strategy Update 2015 (VNK 2014, 20), the communication tools used by different organizations should be pooled in order to save on resources and to improve the service level.

The Communications officers' meeting has agreed that the Team Finland network will have a common newsdesk which provides communication services to the whole network. The newsdesk will be appointed during spring 2016, and it will have members from different Team Finland organizations. (Brander 12 April 2016.)

Team Finland newsletters

All of the Team Finland network organizations publish or have published newsletters. The number of published newsletters exceeds 30. The newsletters are published mainly on a monthly basis. The newsletters can be seen as informative newsletters targeted to the SMEs seeking internationalization or SMEs at different phases of internationalization. Different network organizations may publish several newsletters i.e. Tekes has own newsletters for several of its ongoing programmes.

2.4 Needs and objectives for this thesis

The Team Finland network was formed four years ago, and it remains in the agenda of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government. As the four organizations of the network move under the same roof and form the Team Finland house, it is possible to raise the awareness of Team Finland network's services and achieve cost savings by combining external communications and other support functions. (VNK 2016, 12–13.)

The Federation of Finnish Enterprises, the interest and service organization for small and medium-sized enterprises and their owners, together with Finnvera and TEM publish twice a year the Pk-yritysbarometri (later referred as SME Barometer) which describes the activities of small and medium-sized enterprises and the economic environment.

According to the SME Barometer published in February 2015, the internationalization is a big step for a company, and it requires taking economic risks and therefore financing. Finnish markets are also seen limited which makes the international markets seem a good way for a company to grow. The SME Barometer also states that the small and medium-sized enterprises think that all the expert services and financing offered are scattered and hard to find. (Suomen Yrittäjät 2015, 26–27.)

SME Barometer published last year revealed that the Team Finland network was known to only 3 percent of the respondents (total of 4400 respondents), 14 percent knew something about the network's services, and 83 percent said that they do not know about the Team Finland network or they cannot say. The ones that have used Team Finland network's services are very pleased with the services, advice, and financing received. (Ibid.) The SME Barometer results clearly indicate that Team Finland as a network has not been able to reach its relevant stakeholders, the SMEs seeking internationalization services.

The Federation of Finnish Enterprises carried out a survey in March 2014 which was sent to the national Team Finland coordinators to find out how the work of the Team Finland network and especially the cooperation of the 15 local networks had started. According to the survey results, the core organizations of the local networks knew about the services each organization was providing but there was a need for a creation of common processes. The survey results also indicated a need for communication and training, and that the primary goal was to build up a strong team spirit to reach the Team Finland network's objectives. (Suomen Yrittäjät 2014, 4–5.)

In July 2014, Ms Paula Aikio-Tallgren, who at the time was a member of the Executive Group of the Federation of Finnish Enterprises and the Team Finland Steering Group wrote a column in Helsingin Sanomat in which she commented on the survey results. According to her, as the survey results indicate that the network's actors are quite pleased with the current state of the network, they might not feel the urge to develop the network organization, and only focus on their own services, and thus there will be overlaps and resources are wasted. (Aikio-Tallgren 2014.)

The Team Finland network is an ambitious task to bring together all the scattered internationalization services, and to communicate about them as one function. The challenge in Team Finland network communication is the fact that the communication departments of each organization are independent and follow their own organization's communication guidelines. The network has its own communication guidelines which the network organizations have approved, and those guidelines should be followed as well. As the Team Finland network organizations are responsible for public services their communicational focus should be in providing quality customer communication and advice (Prime Minister's Office 2010, 13).

This is a commissioned research by the Prime Minister's Office. The External Economic Relations Department in Prime Minister's Office is responsible for the coordination of the network and its communication. The SME Barometer published in 2015 indicates that the network's stakeholders are not aware of the network and its services. Therefore it can be said that the network organization has not quite yet reached its full potential to communicate as one entity, and some measures are to be taken to improve the situation. The current Finnish economic situation also requires tighter coordination of the usage of public funds. Juha Sipilä's Government sees Team Finland network as an important element in the Government key project on entrepreneurship and employment, and therefore it is important that the network and its communication operate effectively.

This thesis focuses on the stakeholder communication of the first priority of the network – the internationalization services the network organizations are providing. The main stakeholder group in this research is the SMEs seeking internationalization services. The research focused on the different newsletters the network organizations are publishing. The newsletters were chosen due to the fact that there are number of different newsletters published. At the moment, Team Finland organizations publish more than 30 newsletters.

The objective was to find out in what way the newsletters present the Team Finland network as a whole and show that the organization in question is part of that network, how the different network organizations produce their newsletters, and to make suggestions on how to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters.

Research questions were:

- How do the different network's organizations produce the newsletters?
- How do different newsletters present the Team Finland network and its services as a whole and show that the organization in question is a part of that network?
- How to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the different newsletters?

Those questions were formed to find out if the preliminary propositions – the cooperation within the network has not yet reached its full potential and the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication should be improved in the different newsletters – had any grounds.

3 Literature review

In this chapter, the key concepts and terms of this thesis are defined. The main framework is corporate communication and specifically stakeholder communication. The literature review also focuses on the network organization. There is a short discussion at the end of each subchapter how the chosen framework or term relates to the research topic at hand.

3.1 Communication

Communication has been defined in many ways. Joep Cornelissen (2014, 7) defines communication as tactics and media that are used to communicate with internal and external groups. According to Åberg, communication is a process in which messages are sent between the sender and the receiver. A message is something that the sender has consciously formed from signs to create a meaning. (Åberg 2002, 27.)

Elisa Juholin (2013, 23) states that an organization does not exist without communication. According to her, organizational communication is in the core of organizational operations. Communication is part of every organization's – whether a company, public organization, NGO or a loose network organization – operations and a precondition for its existence. In her opinion, internal and external communication are something which no longer can be separated.

According to Blundel, Ippolito and Donnarumma (2013), effective communication requires that parties involved try to understand each other. Effective communication creates positive achievements for the organization. It can lead to satisfied customers, well-motivated employees, a positive reputation or even innovative and creative strategies for the company. But the organizations communicating are often complex in nature, and thus communication faces challenges arising from organizational structures, cultural diversity across organisations and departments, or political, financial and time pressures. (Blundel, Ippolito & Donnarumma 2013, 2.)

The traditional transmission model of communication understands the communication process as linear process between the sender and the receiver. Probably the most known presentation of this model is by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver from 1940s. According to their model as described in Figure 3, communication can be disturbed by noise which makes the receiver unable to comprehend the message as it was meant to be understood by the sender. Today, the term noise is understood in a wider context and is used to explain all kinds of barriers which hinder the effective communication which seeks to minimize the disturbances of noise. Those barriers can be overstepped by focusing on the receiver, planning the content, format and delivery of the message. (See Figure 3; Blundel & al. 2013, 5–6 & 51; Fawkes 2008, 21; Wiio 2009, 19.)

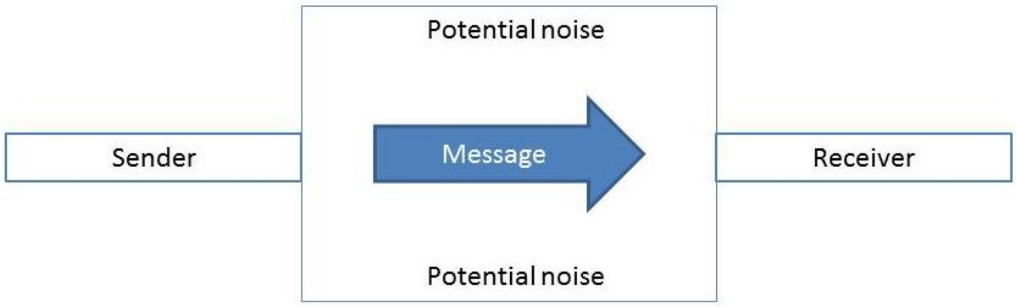

Figure 3: Simple linear model of communication

Looking at communication as merely a process can be seen too mechanical. It can be said that communication is the basis of all social activities. Then it is required to focus also on the meanings which are transported through communication. Shared meanings create cultures. (Åberg 2000, 20.) The semiotic field of communication studies is interested in how meaning is created in the mind of the receiver – how the receiver decodes images and words according to their own personal, cultural or social terms to create meaning (Fawkes 2008, 26).

There is a myriad of organizations communicating about the Team Finland network and its services, and if the communication is not carefully planned the network might not appear as a meaningful entity for its stakeholders. The network organizations are communicating about their Team Finland services in the same channels and with the same tools they are using to communicate about their other issues, and therefore there is a lot of this so called noise which may hinder the Team Finland related communication. To get the Team Finland message through requires that the message is consistent throughout the different organization's channels and tools.

3.2 Corporate communication

According to van Riel & Fombrun (2007, 22) corporate communication comprises of management communication, marketing communication, and organizational communication. Management communications is communication between the management and the organizations' internal and external audiences. Marketing communications consist of product advertising, direct mail, personal selling, and sponsorship activities. Organizational communication is public relations, public affairs, investor relations, environmental communication, corporate advertising, and employee communication. For an organization to communicate successfully all these three types of communication should support each other. (Ibid., 14.)

Corporate communication aims to fulfil the organizational objectives. van Riel and Fombrun (2007) define corporate communication as follows:

> Corporate communication is the set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communications aimed at creating favourable starting points with stakeholders on which the company depends. (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 22.)

Cornelissen's (2014) definition of corporate communication focuses on the corporate communication as a function:

> Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent. (Cornelissen 2014, 5.)

Financial Times Lexicon (2016) defines corporate communication as follows:

> Corporate communication is a management function or department, like marketing, finance, or operations, dedicated to the dissemination of information to key constituencies, the execution of corporate strategy and the development of messages for a variety of purposes for inside and outside the organization. (Financial Times Lexicon 2016.)

All these above mentioned definitions create an understanding that corporate communication is vital for an organization in establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with the different stakeholder groups and in the implementation of corporate strategy.

The term corporate communication can also be used in connection with other organizations such as public and private companies, businesses, NGOs and government agencies as they also operate in competitive environments and have to develop images which would attract their stakeholders (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 26).

Cornelissen also states that corporate communication is likely to be complex in nature. According to him, this is especially so in organizations with wide range of products or services and where the coordination of communication is a balancing act between different actors involved. (Cornelissen 2014, 5.)

Professor Osmo A. Wiio's laws of Human Communication from the 1970's offer a well-known quotation to describe the complexities of communication. He formed the laws to remind organizations that communication is something that has to be taken seriously in order for it to succeed. Especially his law number 4 - "The more communication there is, the more difficult it is for communication to succeed." – applies in Team Finland context (Wiio 2009, 64; OAW! 2013).

Dimensions of corporate communication

According to Blundel & al. (2013, 9) the most common key dimensions of corporate communication are: verbal and non-verbal, one-way and two-way, inter-personal and mass, and internal and external.

Verbal communication is communication with words and can be sub-divided into spoken and written forms. **Non-verbal communication** forms include kinesics (i.e. body language), proxemics (i.e. distance between people as they interact, use of visual media, e.g. signs) and other non-verbal sensory stimuli (e.g. sounds, smells). **One-way** (e.g. posters and podcasts, lectures) and **two-way** (e.g. interviews, meetings) communication refers to the direction in which messages are travelling. **Inter-personal communication** occurs when people interact in small groups through face-to-face channels such as meetings, and **mass communication** occurs when a message is sent to a large number of people through the use of some form of technology. **Internal and external communications** are the two dimensions of organizational communication. Internal communication is taking place within the boundaries of an organization, and external communication involves the organization and its audiences in a wider world. (Blundel & al. 2013, 9–11.) In recent years, the line between internal and external communication has become blurred due to the changes in the organizational structures; e.g. the out-sourcing, and forming of network organizations (Ibid., 175).

Corporate communication can also be divided into official and unofficial communication. **Official communication** represents the established practices of an organization, e.g. weekly meetings held on Tuesdays, customers contact the company via the company website. **Unofficial communication** occurs face-to-face, during coffee breaks, in the offices, at home and with friends. The unofficial communication can be changed by the management by developing the organizational culture. (Lohtaja-Ahonen & Kaihovirta-Rapo 2012, 14.)

Communication channels can be divided into written and verbal channels. In **written channels**, the information is distributed in written form, e.g. press releases, memos, reports, annual reports, websites, newsletters. In **verbal channels**, the information is usually disseminated in spoken form and in face-to-face situations. These situations are such as meetings, negotiations, and press conferences among others. Currently the internet provides the possibility to mix the written and verbal channels in video conferences where the participants see each other and hear what the others are saying with the aid of camera and microphone. They are also able to share documents and edit them simultaneously. (Ibid., 50.)

The communication channels can also be divided into official and unofficial channels. **Official channels**, such as meetings, press releases, magazines, etc. are usually used when the communication is planned. **Unofficial channels**, such as discussions during the lunch break or in social media, are also important. They complement and clarify the information distributed in the official channels. (Ibid., 51.)

This thesis comprehends the Team Finland network as an organization, and therefore the concept of corporate communication apply. The Government has set up clear objectives for the network which the organization should aim to reach. In order to fulfil the objectives set up by the Government, the network organizations should incorporate those common objectives into their own operations. Those objectives should also be supported by the communication operations.

The network's communication is complex in nature since the network consists of several organizations which all have their own communication strategies and guidelines. As the network is formed by different organizations, coordinated, active communication, aligned messages, and the use of visual signs (e.g. Team Finland logo) play a vital role in making the stakeholders aware of the network, and thus building up a stronger Team Finland brand.

This thesis focuses on Team Finland newsletters which can be seen as one-way, mass communication for external audiences. A newsletter is an official channel which mainly disseminates information in written form. The Team Finland network organizations are publishing newsletters, and therefore it is a relevant channel to focus on this research.

3.3 Stakeholder

According to Cornelissen (2014, 7) a stakeholder is any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives. According to Carroll & Buchholtz (2006, 23) stakeholders are individuals or groups who interact with business and who have a "stake" or a vested interest in the organization.

Organizations have several stakeholder groups. One way to categorize the stakeholder groups is to divide them into internal and external stakeholder groups. Internal stakeholders are the employees of the organization and/or business owners. This group can be divided into smaller groups like management, units, departments, teams etc. External stakeholders are current customers, potential customers, consumers, competitors, NGOs, partners, media, investors, government, community members etc. (Carroll & Buchholtz 2006, 23; Isohookana 2007, 13–14.) An organization can also have stakeholder groups which it cannot pinpoint.

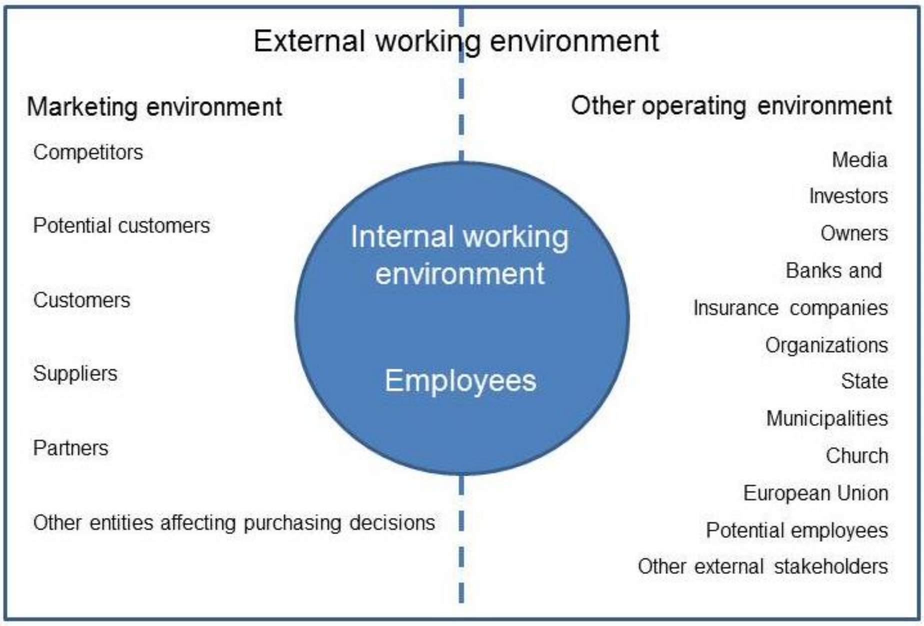

Figure 4: Organization's stakeholder groups (Isohookana 2007, 14)

According to Isohookana (2007, 14–15) the external stakeholders can be divided into two main groups based on the operational environment they belong to as can be seen in the Figure 5: stakeholder groups in micro environment and stakeholder groups in macro environment (See Figure 4). Stakeholder groups in marketing environment (micro environment) include e.g. current and potential customers, suppliers, partners and competitors. Stakeholder groups in other operating environment (macro environment) include e.g. owners, media, municipality, government and unions. Potential employees and NGOs are also part of these macro stakeholder groups.

Another way to categorize stakeholder groups is to divide them into Core stakeholders, Strategic stakeholders and Environmental stakeholders. Core stakeholders are essential for the survival of the organization. Strategic stakeholders are vital to the organization, and Environmental stakeholders are all others in the organization's environment that do not belong to the two other groups. (Carroll & Buchholtz 2006, 71.)

This thesis benefits from the thinking of Isohookana (2007, 14). The external stakeholder groups which operate in the marketing environment (micro environment) are the ones which should be fully aware of the Team Finland network's services. The internal working environment is also important since the employees implement the strategies and guidelines. Of course the stakeholders in macro environment (e.g. the Government) are important to the Team Finland network, but the focus of this thesis is on the external stakeholder groups in micro environment, especially the customers i.e. the SMEs seeking internationalization.

3.4 Stakeholder communication

According to Cornelissen (2014), stakeholder communication provides stakeholders information about company's operations. The type of information depends on the stake that an individual holds in an organization, and therefore different stakeholder groups need different kind of information on the company's operations. (Cornelissen 2014, 46.)

According to Isohookana (2007), the purpose of communication is to create, maintain, develop, and strengthen the interaction between a company and its stakeholders. It is important to do stakeholder mapping and analysis in order to provide current information to different stakeholders and gain relevant information needed for a company to run its business effectively. (Isohookana 2007, 13.)

Stakeholder analysis

In stakeholder analysis, the primary and other stakeholder groups are defined. It is also mapped what kind of information, conceptions and opinions those groups have on the organization and its operations, products, services, and communication. In addition, it is also mapped what the different stakeholder groups expect from the organization and its communication, and how would they like to interact with the organization. (Kortetjärvi-Nurmi & Murtola 2015, 56.)

There are also other ways to define the key stakeholder groups. Stakeholders can be mapped by using the stakeholder salience model or the power-interest matrix. These two mapping devices provide knowledge of different stakeholders and their influence, and help organizations to plan communication strategies and activities. (Cornelissen 2014, 47.)

Stakeholder salience model

In stakeholder salience model, the stakeholders are identified based on how visible or prominent a stakeholder is to an organization. The importance of the stakeholder is based on him holding one or more of three attributes: power, legitimacy and urgency. According to the model, the more prominent the stakeholder is, the more active communication is required. The stakeholders are classified and prioritized according to the three key attributes. Power refers to the power of the stakeholder group holds upon an organization, legitimacy refers to the claim laid upon the organization, and urgency refers to the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate action. These attributes form seven different types of stakeholders as described in Figure 5. (See Figure 5; Cornelissen 2014, 47.)

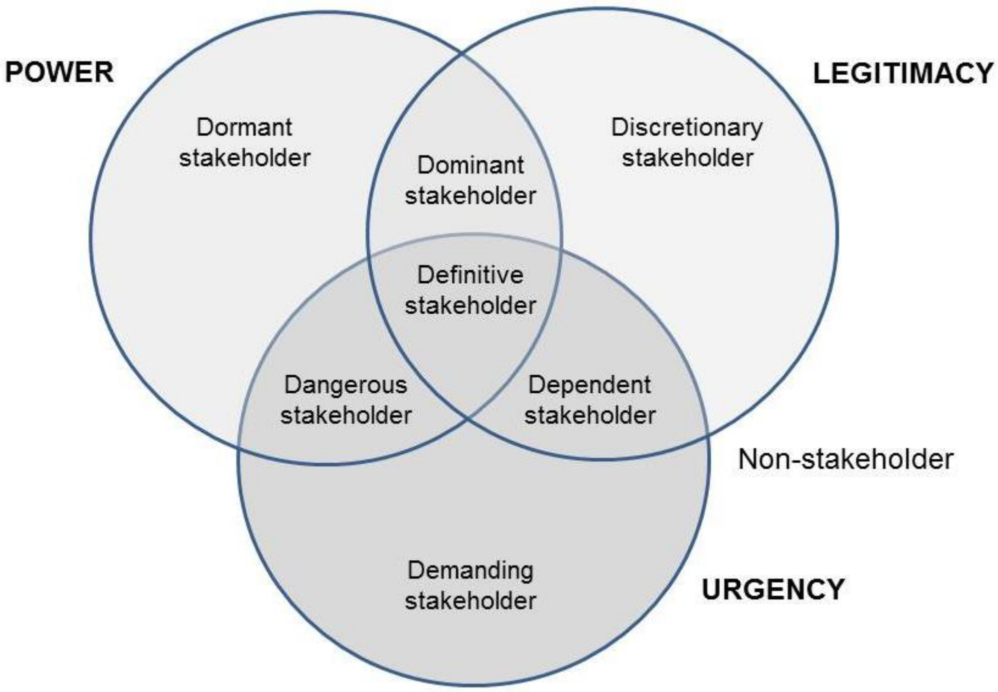

Figure 5: Stakeholder salience model (Cornelissen 2014, 48)

Latent stakeholder groups only hold one of the attributes. Those are: Dormant stakeholders, Discretionary stakeholders, and Demanding stakeholders. Dormant stakeholders are those who have the power but do not have a legitimate relationship or urgent claim. Discretionary stakeholders have a legitimate relationship with the organization but do not have power or urgent claims. Demanding stakeholders have urgent claims but have no power or legitimacy to enforce them. **Expectant stakeholder groups** hold two of the attributes. Those are: Dominant stakeholders, Dangerous stakeholders, and Dependent stakeholders. Dominant stakeholders have both power and legitimacy, and therefore have a strong influence on the organization. Dangerous stakeholders have power and urgent claims, and Dependent stakeholders have urgent and legitimate claims. The final group consists of Definitive stakeholders who possess legitimacy, power and urgency and therefore this group should be communicated with. (Cornelissen 2014, 47–50.)

Once the organization has classified the different stakeholder groups according to their salience, the communication can be planned accordingly e.g. Dominant and Definitive stakeholders such as employees, customers and shareholders need to be communicated on an ongoing basis. The communication usually includes e.g. newsletters, corporate events, intranet, and advertising. Organizations usually also communicate with expectant stakeholder groups but do not communicate with latent stakeholder groups. (Ibid.)

The power-interest matrix

Another way to map stakeholders is to use the power-interest matrix. The stakeholders are categorized on the basis of the power they hold and the degree to which they are likely to show an interest in the organization's activities as displayed in Figure 6 (See Figure 6; Cornelissen 2014, 50).

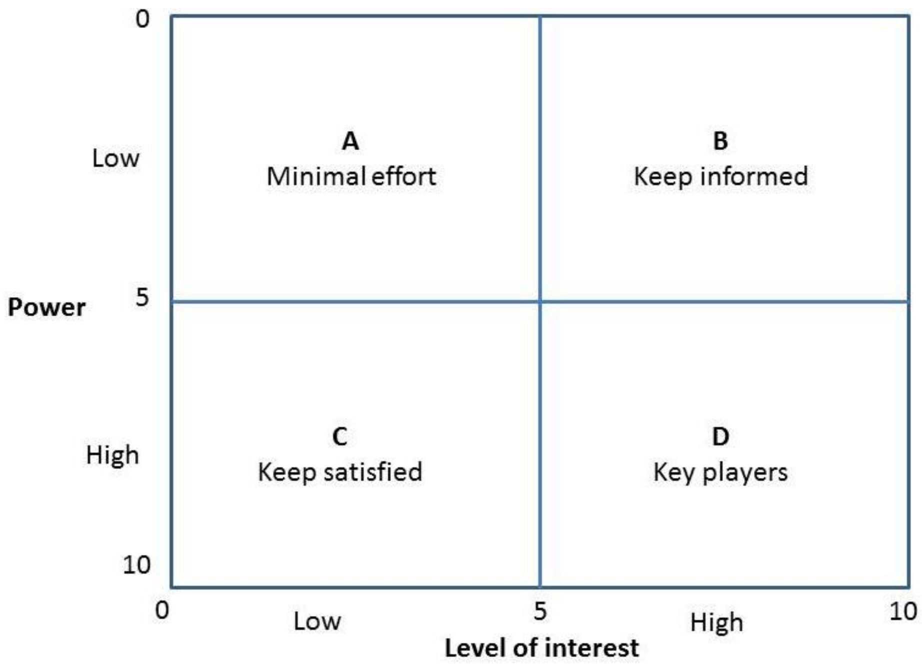

Figure 6: The power-interest matrix (Cornelissen 2014, 50)

Different stakeholder groups are placed on the matrix based on the power they hold and their level of interest towards the organization. This again makes the communication planning easier. The Key players need to be constantly communicated with. An organization benefits in communicating with the stakeholder groups in quadrant B in order to keep them committed to the organization and act as advocates. Organizations should not forget the stakeholders in quadrant C since they might be activated by a corporate activity or a particular decision. It should also be noted that stakeholders may move from one quadrant to another depending on the situation or issue at hand. (Cornelissen 2014, 51.)

The SME Barometer results indicate that the Team Finland network has challenges in its stakeholder communication. The definitive stakeholder group of the Team Finland network – the SMEs seeking internationalization services – are not aware of the network's existence or the services it provides (Suomen Yrittäjät 2015, 26–27). It can be said that at the moment, the network's communication does not create, maintain, develop, or strengthen the interaction between the network and its stakeholders.

Stakeholder communication strategies

There are different strategies which can be applied when communicating with stakeholders. According to Cornelissen (2014, 51–52) there are three different communication strategies which can be applied on stakeholders depending on the desired effect of the action taken: informational strategy, persuasive strategy, and dialogue strategy as described in the Table 1 (See Table 1).

Table 1: Stakeholder communication: from awareness to commitment (Cornelissen 2014, 51)

Stakeholder effects	**awareness →**	**understanding →**	**involvement →**	**commitment**
Tactics	Newsletters Reports Memos Free publicity	Discussions Meetings Advertising and educational campaigns	Consultation Debate	Early incorporation Collective problem-solving
Type of strategy	**Informational strategy**	**Informational / persuasive strategy**	**Dialogue strategy**	

The **informational strategy** consists of actions (press releases, newsletters, reports etc.) which merely inform the stakeholder about the organization and create awareness of the organization and its functions. The **persuasive strategy** is a strategy where the organization tries to change the attitudes of its stakeholders in a way which is favourable to the organization. These actions are campaigns, meetings and discussions with the stakeholders. The third strategy – the **dialogue strategy** – requires that both the organization and its stakeholders engage in dialogue. This strategy is based on the mutual understanding and decision-making. (Cornelissen 2014, 52.)

According to Cornelissen (2014, 53) above mentioned strategies can be categorised in three models of organization-stakeholder communication as can be seen in Figure 7 (See Figure 7). In informational strategy the communication is one-way, from the organization to its stakeholders, aiming to make information available to stakeholders. The information provided is objective and there is no persuasion regarding the understanding, attitudes or behaviour of the stakeholders. (Cornelissen 2014, 52.)

In persuasive strategy the information flows between the organization and its stakeholders thus the communication is two-way. The model is asymmetrical because the effects of the communication are in favour of the organization. The information is collected from the stakeholders but there is no attempt to change the organization, only attempts to change the attitudes and behaviours of the stakeholders. (Ibid., 53.)

In dialogue strategy the communication is two-way symmetrical. The communication flows between the organization and the stakeholders with a goal to exchange views and to reach mutual understanding between both parties. Both parties are seen as equal. (Ibid.)

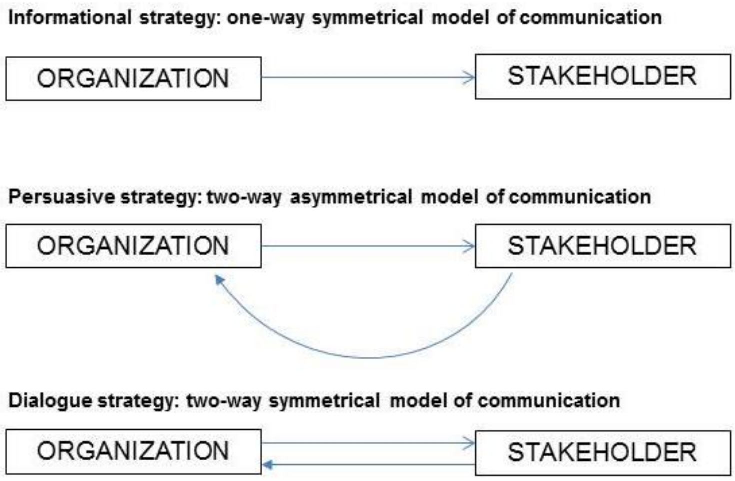

Figure 7: Models of organization-stakeholder communication (Cornelissen 2014, 53)

These above mentioned stakeholder communication strategies are one way of categorizing the stakeholder communication. Another way is to consider the expectations the organization is facing.

Olkkonen & Luoma-aho (2014) define expectation management "as an organization's ability to manage its own understanding of what is expected of it, especially in terms of different expectation types and their differences in relevance and priority".

According to the various Team Finland strategy documents, the Government has great expectations for the Team Finland network to communicate about the services, and make Team Finland brand strong, and the network known among the SMEs seeking those services. There is also the underlying fact that by cooperating and more tightly coordinating the efforts, the usage of public funds would be more efficient. (Valtioneuvoston periaatepäätös 16.5.2012; VNK 2013; VNK 2014; VNK 2016.) Currently the network organization exists in virtual form. The real cooperation under same roof is about to begin in the fall as the Team Finland house will be opened in Ruoholahti. This calls for tighter cooperation in communication to make sure that those expectations are managed.

The focus of this research is to look at Team Finland stakeholder communication in the network organization's different newsletters. The network organizations also use other channels and tools to communicate with their stakeholders (e.g. reports, websites, meetings etc.) but those channels or different tools used are not in the scope of this thesis. As this thesis focuses only on one of the different channels – the newsletter – the ideas presented by Cornelissen (2014, 46) describe the Team Finland stakeholder communication as it is understood in this research. The stakeholder communication strategy used in the newsletters is informational strategy as the main purpose with the newsletters is to create awareness of the organization, its services and functions (Cornelissen 2014, 52).

3.5 Newsletter

There are several channels and tools which can be applied in corporate communication such as press releases, magazines, webcasts, meetings etc. Although it can be said, that social media has increased its importance also in corporate communication, the old tools, such as press releases, letters, magazines and newsletters are commonly used. One of the positive aspects of a newsletter is the fact that the subscribers have shown an interest towards the issuing company, service or issue which the newsletter covers, and voluntarily subscribed the newsletter (Juholin 2013, 257). Therefore newsletters can be directed to specific stakeholder groups or individuals, and the content can be planned in a way which meets the needs of those groups or individuals (Fill 2011, 357). This is a commissioned thesis, and the researcher was asked to focus on the newsletters therefore the other channels and tools are not presented in this literature review.

Internet grew rapidly in the 1990's, and today e-mail is the most used internet application. An e-mail, in this case a newsletter, is a popular communication channel among companies and public administration to reach its internal and external stakeholders It can also be an excellent marketing tool to maintain customer relationships, where the customers are reminded of the company, and its products and services. Newsletters can be also informative. In informative newsletters, the communication style resembles more of a press release than a marketing material. An informative newsletter contains information about the organization's events, organizational changes, and other current issues. Newsletter can be only sent to those people who have agreed to receive such mail. Newsletters are used also to promote other news published e.g. in the organizations website. (Juholin 2013, 257; Kortetjärvi-Nurmi & Murtola 2015, 76–78; Wiio 2009, 66.)

Newsletter can also be a powerful channel to reach important stakeholder groups. According to the Use of information and communications technology by individuals -survey published by Statistics Finland in November 2015, 81 per cent of Finns had used the e-mail during the past three months (Official Statistics of Finland 2015).

About the content and layout

According to the literature, the newsletter subscribers expect to receive meaningful content. The message in newsletters should be targeted to meet the requirements of a specific stakeholder group. The content should be something that the subscribers – the stakeholders – can use in their own operations. The content of a newsletter should be planned and the publishing schedule stable. Newsletters can be published e.g. once a month or five times a year if there is meaningful content for all the newsletters. (Kortetjärvi-Nurmi & Murtola 2015, 126; Palomäki 14 September 2015.)

The literature has defined several aspects of what makes a good newsletter. Those are e.g. 1) The subject field of a newsletter should always state the main topic of the newsletter; 2) A good newsletter has only few topics (three to five); 3) A good newsletter starts with a main headline; 4) All of the topics / stories should have their own heading and a lead text and the lead text is followed by a Read more –link; 5) A well-formed newsletter has also Remove from this list –button at the end of the newsletter so the subscriber can stop ordering the newsletter easily. (Kortetjärvi-Nurmi & Murtola 2015, 126; Palomäki 14 September 2015.)

Newsletters are usually created by using a specific application, and they follow the organizational visual layout. Images, drawings, headings and other elements are used to make the newsletter appear interesting. The non-verbal elements in written communication include e.g. layout, paragraphing, fonts, images, emoticons and colours. In newsletters the non-verbal messages mainly relate to the timing and the style of the message. Kortetjärvi-Nurmi & Murtola (2015) emphasize that it is important to think of the timing of a newsletter from the point of view of the receiver. The applications which are used to create the newsletters often include the possibility to postpone the actual sending to a later point of time. (Kortetjärvi-Nurmi & Murtola 2015, 29.) According to Palomäki (2015) is also important to follow-up how many of the subscribers actually open the newsletter and which content is mostly read. This way it is easy to develop the newsletter to better meet the needs of the subscribers. (Palomäki 14 September 2015.)

Public administration and state-funded organizations rarely advertise on their services. Newsletter can be seen as a good channel to communicate about organization’s services, events and other current issues. It is relatively cheap, and if compiled wisely an excellent tool to reach organization's different stakeholders. (Kortesuo 2009, 124.)

This thesis comprehends a newsletter as a channel and a tool. It is a channel which the Team Finland network's organizations use to communicate to their internal and external stakeholder groups. It can also be seen as a tool for the organization to remind its stakeholders, in this case the SMEs seeking internationalization, about the organization and the internationalization services the network as a whole provides.

Newsletters are an effective channel to create awareness of the organization, its services or other issues which are relevant for both the organization and its stakeholders. The effectiveness requires though careful planning, consistent messages and follow-up.

3.6 Network organization

There are several types of organizations in the society and they all have specific communicational needs. According to Juholin (2013, 25) an organization is an entity which has a purpose and goals, which has need, motivation and obligations to disseminate information about itself and communicate with its operating environment. The form of organization sets the basis for its communication.

Network organizations compile organizations whose component units are assembled to meet a particular set of demands. They can be assembled in many different ways: Some are created by the different units from the same organization and some by different organizations. Some network organizations are created on a long term basis and others for short-time projects. (Conrad & Poole 2012, 205.)

The network organizations are usually loyal to their own organization but there is no intrinsic loyalty towards the network organization. There are challenges in how to motivate and control the different organizations since there is no clear hierarchical authority and the network gives the organizations a freedom in how they organize their work and how they take part in the joint effort of the network. To overcome these challenges, a trust needs to be cultivated in the network. It is the cement which holds the network together. Trust is achieved by cooperation, and with the organizations carrying out their responsibilities on time and effectively. Another way to overcome the challenges of motivation is an inspiring and meaningful task. The task or a goal can inspire the organizations to work hard and coordinate the work. The meaningful task is not enough alone, and trust needs to be built. Open communication within the network builds trust. Another way to motivate and control the different organizations is to build formal systems for monitoring and controlling member organizations and their activities. (Ibid., 217–218.)

According to Conrad & Poole (2012), network organizations have generally four characteristics. They are flexible, team-based, flat, and use ICT. Flexible organizational structure enables for the organization to adapt easily should new projects, demands, or problems arise. Network organization should be designed in a way which promotes teamwork. Clear goals should be defined which would specify the overall mission and the contribution of each unit. This way each unit can manage their own operations to contribute to the organizational mission. The teams should have representation from the different organizations. Network organizations usually have flat organizational structures. They rarely rely on hierarchy and usually cooperate and negotiate. ICT is commonly used to make sure that the activities are coordinated and interdependent. (Ibid., 206–207.)

Network organizations can also become boundaryless organizations where it is not always clear where one organization begins and one ends. It can be so that the network organizations share practices, knowledge, and members. (Ibid., 209.)

The forming of the network in the public sector can be seen as change in the operating environment and the mode of operation of the different organizations, and change usually creates resistance. According to Kotter & Schlesinger (2008) there are four main reasons to resist change. The first is that the participants of change – in this case change being the cooperation in communication activities – are afraid of losing something and tend to focus on their own interests and not that of the whole Team Finland network. The second reason is that the participants do not fully understand the change and its implications, they might not trust the change initiator (in this case there are several, the Government, Steering group, Secretariat, Team Finland Communications Team). The third reason is that the organizations do not see the benefits the network organization offers to them, and the final fourth reason is that the organizations have a low tolerance of change – this can be seen as implicating the slow changes taking place in the public sector. (Kotter & Schlesinger 2008, 132–134.)

Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) also have defined several ways to overcome the resistance. Those include **education and communication** about the reasons behind the change and about the benefits of the change; **participation and involvement** of the parties involved since that leads to commitment; **facilitation and support** for the organizations to ease their change; **negotiation and agreement** where the resisters are offered some sort of incentives; **manipulation and co-optation** where the co-optation means that a participant is given a desirable position in the planning or implementation process of the change and manipulation where the change is presented as the only way out; and **explicit and implicit coercion** where the change is forced down by threatening the parties involved. These measures should be used in combination for them to be effective. (Ibid. 134–145.)

The Team Finland network is assembled on a long term basis. In fall 2016 as the Team Finland house is formed, and the four organizations move under the same roof, the purpose is to deepen the cooperation between the different network organizations. The Team Finland newsdesk which will be formed in the spring 2016 will be the first step to share the employees from the different Team Finland organizations to benefit the whole network.

Communication in the Team Finland network plays a critical role. Communication can build bridges between the organizations, and its most important internal and external stakeholders, as well as activate and facilitate the participation and involvement of the members. (Invernizzi & Romenti 2013, 103.)

It can also be said that without effective communication, Team Finland services would not be known among its relevant stakeholder groups. Communication in the network organization is particularly challenging, since all the different organizations have their own formal structures, cultural diversity, and political, financial and time pressures which are not visible or known by the other network members. It can be stated that by improving communication practices real differences can be achieved in the performance of an organization. (Blundel & al. 2013, 17.)

3.6.1 Customer orientation in the public sector

In this subchapter, the particularities of customer orientation in the public sector are briefly explained and discussed in the light of the research topic since one of the reasons behind the forming of the Team Finland network was the fact that the services should be pooled for the customer to find them more easily.

Customer orientation is something that has not previously been in the center of the attention in the public sector. As public sector rarely has competitors, there is no pressure arising from the competition. There are also obstacles which hinder the customer orientation. It has been a common idea among the public sector that the mere existence of the services and informing about them is enough. Nowadays it is understood that public sector has customers and they have needs which have to be taken into consideration if applicable when planning operations, products or services. The modern customers want to have quality service and public sector organizations should be willing to provide that. The customer should be seen as the starting point and the goal of the quality service, and not only as the object. (Vuokko 2009, 90–94.)

According to Vuokko (2009), there are four reasons why the public sector should focus on customer orientation: 1) Pressures from the organization, e.g. streamlining the organization; 2) Pressures from the customers, i.e. customers are quality-conscious; 3) Pressure from competition, e.g. privatization of public services; and 4) Pressure from other stakeholder groups, e.g. changes in the cooperation, publicity. (Ibid., 95–96.)

The current economic situation has also made the public sector to develop its operations towards more business-like and customer oriented ways. This usually means that the customer needs are taken into consideration when operations are planned. The customer orientation has also made it possible to reduce some activities and to focus on the essential operations. (Ibid., 96.)

The customer orientation has been one of the founding ideas of the Team Finland network. It was seen early on that the different services the state was offering to the SMEs seeking internationalization were scattered and hard to find. The Team Finland network, coordinated stakeholder communication together with Team Finland brand should make the different services visible to those needing them. A lot has been done already. The team.finland.fi-website presents the different services, and the customer, the SME seeking those services, is able to reach those services by calling to the Team Finland service number or by filling in the contact form (Team Finland 2016a).

3.6.2 Corporate brand and image

In this subchapter, corporate brand and image are defined since they have a role in the network’s communication in uniting the different organizations and the internationalization services to be a part of the Team Finland network.

According to van Riel & Fombrun (2007), brands communicate a combination of verbal, visual, and emotional cues to create images in the minds of observers. Nowadays the branding principles are also used to create positive organizational perceptions among different stakeholder groups. Image can be seen as the specific configuration of perceptions which form in the minds of observers. (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 39.)

Corporate brand is a visual representation of a company. It unites a group of products or businesses under one name. Corporate branding consists of activities which aim at building positive associations and reputations with different stakeholders. A strong corporate brand can create trust among stakeholders and bring savings to the company. (Ibid., 107–109.)

According to Cornelissen (2014), the advantages of a strong image for organizations can be categorised under three headings: distinctiveness, impact, and stakeholders. A distinctive image may help stakeholders find or recognize an organization. If the communication is consistent, a corporate image creates awareness and recognition, and it can even build confidence among stakeholders because they will have a clearer picture of the organization. A strong corporate image can have an impact on stakeholders in a way which makes them to favour the company. This in return can have a strong impact on overall performance of the company. When the company message is consistent it benefits the stakeholders since they might have more than one stakeholder role in relation to an organization. (Cornelissen 2014, 64–65.)

Organizational identities can be structured in three different ways: monolithic, endorsed, and branded. In **monolithic structure**, all products and services, buildings, official communication and employee behaviour are branded with the same company name and visual style. In **branded structure**, products and services are presented with their own brand name and values. They do not have any relation to each other or to the parent organization. In **endorsed structure**, the businesses and the products are endorsed with the parent company name. (Olins 1990 in Cornelissen 2014, 72–73 and in van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 121.)

Team Finland consists of organizations which all have their own identities and to bring those different organizations and services they provide under one umbrella, the Team Finland brand and identity has been created. The basic guidelines to use the Team Finland logo are defined in the Communications Guidelines and should be considered binding whenever the different organizations revise their communications (Team Finland 2016b). Team Finland aims at being the endorsed corporate brand for all the scattered internationalization services the different network organizations are offering. The Team Finland brand should be visible in the network's corporate and stakeholder communications. When the Team Finland brand and the Team Finland message are presented consistently throughout the different newsletters it benefits the SMEs since they would became aware of the larger service range the network is providing. It would also benefit the different network organizations since one SME might need the services provided by the other network organizations.

3.7 Summary

The Team Finland network communication is a complex issue since so many different organizations are involved. To narrow the complexity, this thesis comprehends the Team Finland network as a network organization, and therefore does not focus on the individual organizations and their stakeholder communication. It can be said that a network organization relies heavily on its ability to communicate, and that stakeholder communication – both internal and external - plays a critical role in the existence of the network organization. This thesis does not focus on the internal stakeholder communication of the network but understands its' importance in connection with the planning and executing of the external stakeholder communication. This is a commissioned thesis from the Prime Minister's Office, and the researcher was asked to look into the Team Finland network's external stakeholder communication in the different newsletters.

Newsletter is one of the channels used in stakeholder communication to inform the relevant stakeholders about the Team Finland network. It can also be seen as a marketing tool for the different services the organizations are offering. The newsletters studied are informative newsletters, and part of each Team Finland organizations' corporate communication tool-set. This thesis sees a newsletter as a good channel and a tool. Newsletters can be produced in a way which would meet the needs of the specific stakeholder group it is targeted to.

The SME Barometer published in 2015, indicates that the network's stakeholders are not aware of the network and the services it provides. The SME Barometer results suggest that the network's communication is not operating in a way which would support the network's strategy and objectivities, and thus suggest that the network has not reached its full potential in communicating as a whole. The forming of the network organization as such, the customer orientation focus in the stakeholder communication, and the new ways of cooperation can be seen as a big change in the public sector.

The goal of this thesis is to find out how the Team Finland network and the internationalization services it provides are presented to Team Finland's stakeholders in the different newsletters as a whole, how those newsletters are produced, and to come up with suggestions on how to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the different newsletters.

4 Conducting the research

This chapter begins by describing the chosen research methodology. The research process is explained in detail, and the validity and the reliability of this research is discussed. It is followed by the results of the survey, the results of the analysis of the newsletters, the preliminary suggestions made based on the survey results and benchmarking the newsletters and the improvement ideas which were created in the workshop.

4.1 Research methodology

The methodology chosen for this research is a case study. According to Yin (2014, abstract) case study is the preferred method when (a) “how” and “why” questions are being posed, (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context. Yin (2014, 16) continues that a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

According to Anderson (1993 in Noor 2008, 1602) case studies concern with how and why things happen, allow the investigation on contextual realities and differences between what was planned and what actually occurred. Noor (2008, 1602) also states that case study is not intended as a study of the entire organization, and that it is intended to focus on a particular issue, feature or unit of analysis.

Case study research method uses several data collection techniques e.g. interviews, observation, documentary analysis and questionnaires, and they are usually used in combination. In case study method, one of the main principles is to collect data from multiple sources and with multiple data collection techniques. This ensures data triangulation which assists the researcher gaining full understanding of research topic. Triangulation also makes sure that the collected data tells the researcher what he/she thinks they are telling. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 146.) Another principle is to build up a case study database which contains all the information collected in the course of the research. It is also vital to maintain the chain of evidence, and carefully choose which electronic sources are used. (Yin 2014, 102.)

Yin has defined four types of case study designs. They are single-case (holistic) design, single-case (embedded) design, multiple-case (holistic) design, and multiple-case (embedded) design. The primary distinction in case studies is between single- and multiple-case study designs. This distinction refers to the number of cases used in the research.

Single-case is used when the case is unique, extreme or critical or if the case is typical or gives the researcher the opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon that few have studied before. When a study design contains more than one case it is called multiple-case design. The difference between holistic design and embedded design is in the attention given to the subunit or subunits. In holistic design, the research focuses only in the topic as a whole, and in embedded design a number of logical subunits within the topic are also examined. (Saunders & al. 2009, 146–147; Yin 2014, 50–57).

Data analysis process in general

Case study method produces a lot of data for the researcher to analyze. In case study method, the analysis of the evidence – the data – is one of the aspects which still requires some development. Data analysis involves e.g. examining, categorizing, arranging, testing, or otherwise recombining the evidence to produce findings which are empiric. (Yin 2014, 132–133.)

According to Yin (2014, 136–142) there are four general strategies which can be used:

1. Relying on theoretical propositions.
2. Working the data from the “ground up”.
3. Developing a case description.
4. Examining plausible rival explanations.

In the first strategy, the analysis follows the theoretical propositions which have led to the case study in the first place. These propositions reflect the research questions, literature reviews, and hypotheses or propositions. The second strategy, working the data from the “ground up” is conducted by finding out if the data suggests a useful concept or concepts. This then can lead the researcher to find out additional relationships within the data. The third strategy, developing a case description, uses some descriptive framework to organize the data. This may be useful strategy in situations where there are no clear research questions to begin with. The fourth strategy examines plausible rival explanations and usually works in combination with the previous mentioned three strategies. (Ibid.)

Regardless of the chosen strategy, there are five analytic techniques which can be used to analyze the data. Those techniques include 1) pattern matching, 2) explanation building, 3) time-series analysis, 4) logic models, and 5) cross-case synthesis. In pattern matching the findings of the research are compared with the predicted pattern made before data collection. An explanation building technique is a special type of pattern matching in which the goal is to analyze the data by building an explanation about the case. In this technique the aim is to explain how or why something happened with causal links within the data. Another technique is to conduct a time-series analysis where a single variable is studied over a longer period of time. Logic models technique matches empirically observed events to theoretically predicted events. The cross-case synthesis can be used to the analysis of multiple cases where each case study is treated as a separate study. (Ibid., 142–168.)

The Team Finland network consists of several state-funded organizations, and they all are publishing either one or several newsletters. To fully understand how all these organizations present Team Finland as a whole in their newsletters and how they are produced, and how to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters, a case study method is a good way of gaining in depth understanding of the issue. Although there are several organizations involved, and there are number of newsletters studied, this case study follows a single-case (holistic) design since the researcher focuses only on the Team Finland network and how the newsletters present Team Finland as a whole.

In this research, the data was gathered from various sources such as unstructured interviews, survey, analysis of the newsletters, different documents and discussions in the workshop. The data analysis relied on the theoretical proposition strategy and used the pattern matching technique. The theoretical frameworks in this case study are corporate communications and stakeholder communications in network organization. The initial research questions are:

- How do the different network's organizations produce the newsletters?
- How do different newsletters present the Team Finland network and its services as a whole and show that the organization in question is a part of that network?
- How to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the different newsletters?

Those questions were formed to find out if the preliminary propositions – the cooperation within the network has not yet reached its full potential and the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication should be improved – had any grounds, and the technique used was pattern matching.

4.2 Research process

The research data was acquired from several Team Finland related documents and other sources, having unstructured interviews on the subject with Mari-Kaisa Brander, the Head of Team Finland Communications in the Prime Minister's Office, sending out an online survey to the compilers of the newsletters, and analysing the newsletters.

In the process of combining the results of the survey with the analysis of the newsletters, it become obvious that to address properly the research question three “How to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters?” involvement from the different network organizations was needed. To involve the different organizations in the process, the researcher arranged a workshop in May 2016. The workshop was one of the preliminary suggestions to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication which were presented in the Communications officers’ meeting in March 2016.

After the presentation of the survey and newsletter analysis results and the preliminary suggestions, it was agreed that a workshop will be arranged later in the spring 2016 to find out how the producers of the newsletters would improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the different newsletters. The preliminary idea had been that the workshop would have been arranged for the newsdesk, but since the newsdesk had not yet been formed, the workshop was organized for the network’s communication experts working in the different organizations.

Additionally in April 2016, the situation evolved, and it has been agreed that Kauppapolitiikka magazine, published by UM, will have a 2-pages spread of Team Finland specific content. Kauppapolitiikka magazine is published four times per year, and the magazine is promoted by a newsletter which is published seven times per year. The magazine is free of charge. The magazine is distributed to e.g. representatives of international trade, different organizations in the field of external economic relations, Finnish libraries, educational institutions, parliament, embassies and trade missions. The distribution is approximately 10 000. As the newsletter promotes the Kauppapolitikka magazine, it is also a good channel to promote the Team Finland network to a wider audience. As the 2-pages spread by Team Finland specific content also needs input from different Team Finland organizations, it was agreed that along with the improvement ideas for the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters, the workshop would focus on planning the concept and content of the 2-pages spread. (Brander 12 April 2016.)

This thesis does not include the ideas which relate to the planning of the 2-pages spread in Kauppapolitiikka magazine when reporting on the results of the workshop since that does not fall into the scope of the topic of this thesis. In cases where the discussions fall into the scope of the thesis, the researcher uses the information gained as basic data for the overall assessment of the topic and ideas presented by the researcher.

The research process can be illustrated in a way in which the unstructured interviews, different Team Finland documents and sources, the online survey and the analysis of the newsletters form the basis for the workshop where the preliminary suggestions are evaluated and further development ideas created (See Figure 8).

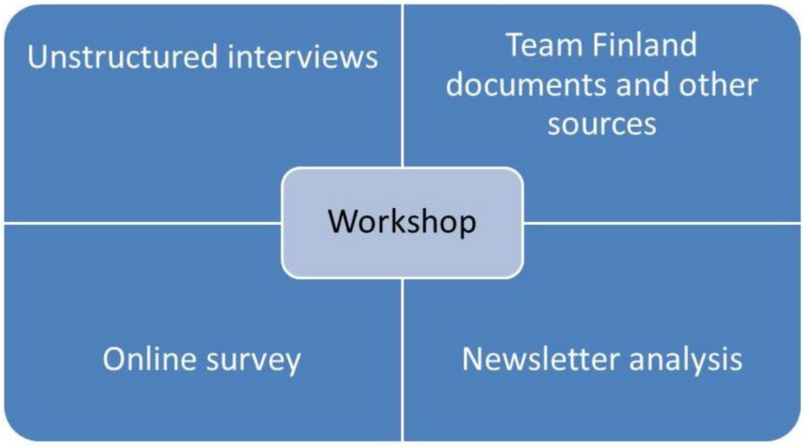

Figure 8: The research process

Unstructured interviews, Team Finland documents and other sources

Information about the current state of the Team Finland network was acquired during the whole research process by unstructured interviews with Ms Mari-Kaisa Brander, the Head of Team Finland Communications in the Prime Minister's Office. An unstructured interview is a discussion around a theme which has been agreed in advance. The discussion takes place face-to-face and both the researcher and the interviewee can influence on the direction of the discussion. (Costley, Elliott & Gibbs 2010, 93.) These meetings were recorded, transcribed and the transcripts saved.

Additional documents were also acquired from Ms Mari-Kaisa Brander which shed light to the network's communication function now and its future development. Other Team Finland related documents and sources were used to gain a full understanding of the network's history and the evolution process, such as Government programmes and other strategic documents, working group reports, committee reports, survey results from other organizations, press releases, and articles published in newspapers.

Online survey

The current state analysis of the newsletters was conducted by sending out a survey (Appendix 1) to the heads of communications and to the actual producers of the newsletters in all of the Team Finland network organizations. Some of the newsletters have such a specific target group (e.g. newsletter by the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce) or some organizations do not publish a newsletter at the moment (e.g. Finland's cultural and academic institutes), and therefore it was agreed that they are not required to complete the survey and were left out from the process.

The online survey was designed together with the Team Finland communication team working in the Prime Minister's Office in December 2015. The survey was mainly a closed-question questionnaire where the researcher had categorized the answers. Most of the questions had an option which allowed the respondent to give an answer which was not represented in the standard categories. The survey was piloted by two persons who are familiar with the Team Finland network in the beginning of January 2016 to make sure that the questions were relevant and that there were no problems in understanding or completing the survey. (Costley & al. 2010, 94.)

The link to the survey together with a cover letter explaining the needs and objectives for the survey was sent by an e-mail to all of the network's organizations. The recipients of the e-mail were asked to forward the link to the survey if they were not the best recipient to give the needed information or e.g. with ELY Centres, the survey was sent to one representative who then forwarded the survey to the other ELY Centres. The recipients were also asked to provide information on all of their Team Finland related newsletters. The survey was open from the 14 January until 26 January 2016. Altogether 26 answers were submitted, and of which 25 had some actual information, and one was blank due to the fact that the organization in question does not publish a newsletter at the moment.

Newsletter analysis

In addition to the survey, 29 of the network's newsletters were also analyzed. The researcher had subscribed the available newsletters which fall into the scope of this thesis from the Team Finland network organizations' websites. The researcher did not analyze the newsletters published by the Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce, and the Finnish Swedish Chamber of Commerce due to the fact that they were earlier omitted from this research. Newsletters published by TEM were also omitted from the analysis, since the newsletters cover issues which mainly are targeted for a much wider target group. The analysis focused on newsletters issued from 1 December 2015 to 31 December 2015.

In her analysis, the researcher focused on issues which would shed light on the research questions on the production of the newsletters, how Team Finland is presented in the newsletters as a whole and finally come up with ideas on how to improve the implementation of stakeholder communication in the different newsletters. To address those issues the researcher focused on the title/subject of the newsletter, issuing organization, issuing date, main topics of the newsletter, number of stories in a newsletter and visual and structural aspects of the newsletters. When analyzing the visual aspects and the structure of the newsletters the assumptions made by the researcher are based on the understanding of what makes a good newsletter as described in the literature review. The data gathered from the newsletters was saved to an excel file along with the link to each newsletter. This was to keep the research process transparent.

Workshop

A workshop is a meeting at which a group of people have discussions and activities on a particular subject or project (oxforddictionaries.com). Workshop can be seen as a group-based method in which the researcher acts as a facilitator. As the data capturing from group discussions can be challenging, it was agreed that the discussions are video and audio recorded, and the group members would write down their suggestion to a large sheets of paper, and the actual improvement ideas which are to be implemented or taken into further development are written down by Ms Mari-Kaisa Brander. (Costley & al. 2010, 96.) In order to gain useful ideas and evaluate the preliminary suggestions on how to improve the stakeholder communication, and involve the producers of the newsletters in the development process, a workshop was seen as a good way to collect the data.

The workshop was facilitated by the researcher. Facilitation is process consultation where the facilitator does not interfere with the content of the workshop. The facilitator is responsible on the workshop process. (Nummi 2007, 11.)

The workshop was facilitated by using the Me, we & us method. It is a method which enables to get all participants' opinions heard and activate all of the participants in the process – also those who are not so vocal or are shy. When using the method, the topic of the workshop is addressed in three different phases: individual working, working in small groups, and working in the whole group. The method can be used for divergent thinking or convergent thinking or both at the same event. In divergent thinking phase, a number of ideas are created, and in the convergent thinking phase, those ideas are evaluated and the ones which should be focused are chosen. If the method is used both for divergent and convergent thinking, it is the facilitators task to make sure that the process remains clear and the participants understand when it is time for divergent thinking and when to move on to convergent thinking. (Kantojärvi 2012, 21 & 43.)

In the individual working phase each participant ponders on the topic individually, maybe writes down notes, for a short period of time. This way it is easier to engage in the following discussions. Then in the second phase, these individual ideas are presented to a smaller group of participants. Each member has a chance to present his or her ideas, and after that those ideas are discussed, and it is decided which of the suggestions are presented to the whole group. In the third phase, the smaller groups present their ideas, and again after the ideas are presented, the discussion and decisions follow. The facilitator is in charge of maintaining the process, which enables different ways of working and learning, on its course. There can be set time limits for each phase, but the actual process should move forward according to how the group works. (Kantojärvi 2012, 43.)

In the Team Finland workshop, the participants were divided into two smaller subgroups each consisting of four persons. There was a separate working space for both of the subgroups. It was agreed that members from same organization would be in different subgroups. In the first phase, every participant was asked to write down his or her own ideas on the topic. This was to ensure that no-one dominated the discussion and everyone's ideas were noted. This phase took five minutes after which the individual ideas were presented to the subgroup. The subgroup then discussed for 20 minutes about their ideas, and chose the ones they wanted to present to the whole group. At the end, each subgroup presented their ideas and then the whole group discussed for 15 minutes about the ideas and collectively decided which ones to implement in the upcoming newsletters or further develop in the future.

The presentation of each groups' common ideas were written down to a large sheet of paper, and the presentation of each subgroups ideas and the general discussion of the whole group was videotaped and the voice recorded by a phone, in order for the researcher to go back and review and analyze the discussions and ideas presented. The actual decisions and further development ideas were written down by Ms Mari-Kaisa Brander who did not take part in the subgroup discussions.

4.3 Validity and reliability

Validity of the research is about whether the findings are what they seem to be about (Saunders & al. 2009, 157). The validity of the survey was ensured by the joint designing with the Team Finland Communication Team and by piloting the test with two respondents who are familiar with the Team Finland network and its services. The survey design benefitted from the cooperation with the Team Finland Communication Team. The researcher was able to add relevant questions and answer options. The small pilot group also gave their input on the survey.

The validity of the whole research was ensured also by the number of different data collection methods: survey, benchmarking the newsletters, and finally the workshop which addressed particularly the third research question and in light of which the preliminary suggestions by the researcher were evaluated. The data triangulation, information gathered from different sources, documents, interviews, survey results, analysis of the newsletters and the data obtained from the workshop also build up the validity of this case study research.

Reliability of the research discusses to which degree the data collection techniques or analysis produce consistent findings (Saunders & al. 2009, 165). The reliability of this case study research was ensured by creating a case study database which contains all the relevant data gathered during the research, e.g. survey results, copies of the newsletters analysed, meeting transcriptions, links to the documents in the Internet, documents saved in pdf-form, and a timeline of the research process.

The reliability issue was also considered when designing the workshop. The participants of the same organization were put into different groups to discuss the issue. The workshop method which was chosen also supported the individual idea creation which makes the results more reliable.

4.4 Results of the survey

This subchapter presents the results from the survey and the conclusions made from the results.

General about the newsletters

The survey included questions which gave the researcher valuable background information on the different newsletters. The survey resulted 26 replies and information on 25 Team Finland organization's newsletters. There were 8 replies from Tekes, 2 from Finpro, 8 from ELY Centres, 3 from Finnvera, and one from Finnfund, Finnpartnership, VTT, PHR, and UM. The reply form from Finnfund was empty due to the fact that they do not publish a newsletter at the moment. Of these 25 newsletters, 10 are published monthly, 5 every three months, one is published every second week, and the rest 3 to 9 times per year. The overall distribution of these newsletters is approximately 95 100. The distribution varies from 80 to 16 000.

The most popular way to market the newsletters is to have the subscription form in the organization's website (20 mentions). The newsletters were also marketed in connection with events and seminars (14 mentions). Three of the newsletters are not marketed at all.

The target groups of the newsletters include

- companies interested in internationalization (14 mentions),

- companies in different phases of internationalization (13 mentions)
- other stakeholder groups (13 mentions), and
- other customers and potential customers (8 and 7 mentions).

Planning, production and follow-up

There were also several questions relating to the planning and production of the newsletters. Most of the newsletters are planned by the communication units/departments (16 mentions) or in some other part of the organization (7 mentions). Communication units/departments are mostly writing the stories (17 mentions). Other writers (12 mentions) are experts, other staff and program leaders. 16 of the 25 respondents said that the stories in the newsletters are previously published material (e.g. blogs, press releases, etc.).

Three of the newsletters are produced by a communications agency, and one newsletter is produced by a freelancer. Pictures for the newsletters are acquired from organization's own image bank (18 mentions) or the organizations take the pictures themselves. Some pictures are acquired from other organizations or advertising agencies. One newsletter has no pictures.

Most of the organizations have acquired a newsletter tool to create and send out the newsletters. Eight newsletters are created with Postiviidakko's tool, four are using Mainostoimisto SST's tool, three are using Campaign Monitor's tool, and Emaileri, webEdition, and Marketing Cloud are also used. One organization has newsletter tool integrated to their web publishing platform.

According to the results, the organizations have difficulty in deciding what to publish in their newsletters (9 mentions). Other obstacles the organizations are facing are the lack of stories (8 mentions) and the overflow of stories (also 8 mentions). The fact that the newsletter does not reach the right target groups is also seen as a problem (5 mentions).

Nine of the 25 respondents said that the content for the next newsletter has been planned, and 12 of the 25 respondents said that the content has not been planned at all. The survey also contained questions relating to the follow-up of the newsletters. 10 of the 25 respondents said that they know which is the most and least read story in their newsletter, and 13 respondents said that they do not have that information. Only one respondent said that they have done a reader survey.

Team Finland and other topics of the newsletters

One of the main ideas of the survey was to find out if the newsletters had Team Finland related content and what other content was published in the newsletters. According to 18 respondents, the fact that an organization is a part of the Team Finland network shows in the newsletters by Team Finland related stories that are published. 16 of the 25 respondents said that they publish stories of organization's own Team Finland services, and nine newsletters also have stories about the other Team Finland network organizations. According to five respondents, the Team Finland network is not visible in their newsletters.

The main topics of the newsletters are own organization's news and events (18 mentions) and information and tips for internalization (14 mentions). Best practises and success stories are also important content (12 mentions).

Respondent's own improvement ideas

The survey also included an open answer question where the respondents were asked to give their own ideas about improving the newsletters. These open answers had a couple of common themes. According to the respondents, their newsletter should be better targeted, and the stories published should offer the specific target groups interesting and important content. The need for better planning was also a common theme in the open end answers.

Conclusions

The survey results shed light to the first two research questions: how do the different network's organizations produce their newsletters and how the newsletters present that the issuing organization is part of the Team Finland network.

According to the results, the target groups of the newsletters are aligned with the Team Finland stakeholder group – the SMEs seeking internationalization. The survey also indicates that Team Finland services are presented in the newsletters. Other content includes organization's own news and events and information and tips for internationalization. According to the survey, in some cases the content of the newsletters is not planned and the target group is not clear. The newsletters are produced by the communication departments and most of the organizations are using a newsletter tool to crate the newsletters. The survey also revealed that not all of the organizations are following up if the subscribers actually open and read their newsletters. When producing the newsletters there is no cooperation between the different Team Finland organizations. The newsletters are produced within the organization and mainly by the communication units or departments.

4.5 Analysis of the newsletters

This subchapter presents the analysis of the newsletters and conclusions from the analysis.

The Team Finland network's newsletters were also separately analysed. The analysed newsletters were published during December 2015. Altogether 29 newsletters were analysed of which 17 were compiled by Tekes, 8 by ELY Centres, and one by Finnvera, UM/Kauppapolitiikka, Enterprise Europe Network, and PRH. As the researcher had decided to analyse the newsletters which were published in December 2015, the analysed newsletters were random and some of the network's newsletters might not have been published during that time frame. As previously mentioned, e.g. Tekes publishes several newsletter and all of the ELY Centres have their own newsletters. Results from this analysis were collected to an excel sheet for the researcher to later review the data.

The analysis of the newsletters was conducted to address all of the research questions, and find out information to evaluate the survey results and gain richer understanding on the research topic. In the analysis, the focus was on issues such as

- the issuing organization and the topic of the newsletter,
- the number of stories,
- the general content of the stories,
- visual and structural aspects
- in what way the newsletters indicate that the organization in question is a part of the Team Finland network, and
- if the newsletter had a Team Finland related story.

About the content

The subject line of the newsletter usually contained the name of the issuing organization or programme (PRH uutisia 18.12.2015 or Tekes Liideri), and in most of the cases it was also the topic of the newsletter. In some cases the subject line of the newsletter was same as the headline of the main news story in the newsletter (Jukka Häyrynen: Pois pöhinästä – statup-yritykset kannattaa ottaa vakavasti). In some cases, the text in the subject field was quite long (Kiertotalous ja uusien ratkaisujen kehitysalustat vahvoja teemoja syksyllä päättyneessä tutkimushaussa). The subject line or the topic of the newsletters did not indicate that the organization issuing the newsletter was a part of the Team Finland network.

The number of stories in the newsletters published in December 2015 varied from 1 to 25. Main topics were organization's own news, industry news and information about upcoming and past events. Only 13 of the analysed 29 newsletters had a clearly Team Finland related story or a link to Team Finland website. 21 of the 29 analyzed newsletters were a collection of earlier published press releases or other material published in the organization's website or a combination of stories published previously and particularly for the newsletter. Also due to the fact that the newsletters were published in December, most of them contained season's greetings which were directed to the organization's various stakeholder groups.

About the visual aspects and structure

All the analysed newsletters had a visible structure. They usually had one main news and several shorter news. Some of them had subheadings to help the reader to get an overview of the whole content. The upcoming events were listed either in left or right margin or in the bottom of the newsletter under own heading. News headline was usually highlighted in some way (e.g. different colour, bigger font size). Lead texts were usually the first paragraph of the story. All of the analysed newsletters had visual elements, e.g. pictures. All of the analysed newsletters seemed to follow the visual guidelines of the issuing organization. The visual aspects or the structure of the newsletters did not indicate that the newsletters were issued by an organization belonging to the Team Finland network.

Conclusions

The analysis of the newsletters gave valuable information which was used to evaluate the results of the survey. The analysis also gave the researcher a better understanding on how the Team Finland network and the services it offers are presented in the newsletters as a whole and in what way it shows that the organization in question is a part of the Team Finland network.

According to the analysis, most of the newsletters do not present the publishing organization as part of the Team Finland network. Team Finland appears in the newsletters if there is something newsworthy to tell in light of the interest of the publishing organization. As the analysed newsletters contained content mainly for the issuing organization, it can be said that there is no cooperation between the different network organizations in the production of the newsletters.

As the analysis included several newsletters published by the same organization, it became obvious that the visual layout of the newsletters follows the visual guidelines of the issuing organization. The newsletters mainly have a clear structure and pictures are used to make the visual appearance more attractive but those aspects do not build awareness of the Team Finland network.

The number of stories in the newsletters indicates that the content of newsletters is not planned, and that the newsletters are not the primary channel as they mainly run stories which have been previously published. The published content was not modified to meet the requirements of the newsletter (e.g. the lead text was the first paragraph of the press release) and this made some of the newsletters seem unprofessionally produced. This was also the case with the topic of the newsletters and the subject line. If the purpose of the newsletter is to promote the previously published content, some effort should be used to have such a subject line for the newsletter which would interest the reader and have him actually click the newsletter open and read the content. For a newsletter to be an effective channel it has its own with specific requirements for the style in which the content is presented, and the content in the analysed newsletters, in some cases, did not take those requirements into consideration.

4.6 Preliminary suggestions

This subchapter presents the preliminary suggestions by the researcher to improve the implementation of stakeholder communication of the Team Finland network in the different newsletters.

After reviewing the survey results and the analysis of the newsletters, the researcher made seven suggestions on how to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the different newsletters in order to shed some light on the third research question “How to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in different newsletters?”. Since the commission was to find out ways to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication the focus has been solely on that. The researcher based the suggestions on the data gained during the research process and on the data which was available, e.g. in the different documents and sources. The results of the analysis and the suggestions were presented to Ms Mari-Kaisa Brander in February 2016 and in the Communications officers’ meeting in March 2016 (Appendix 2).

The preliminary suggestions to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication included acquiring a common newsletter tool, stakeholder mapping, Team Finland newsletter, visual identity for different service areas, tasks to newsdesk, improving the ordering of the newsletters and a workshop. By applying these suggestions, the awareness of the Team Finland network would grow, and the network would start operating in a more effective way. These suggestions are listed below and elaborated in more detail. The suggestions are presented in random order.

Common newsletter tool

The Team Finland network should acquire one newsletter tool for all of the organizations. This would enable Team Finland newsletter layout which would be used in all of the newsletters. The common layout would make the network visible to the recipients and thus strengthen Team Finland. This would also bring financial savings as one organization could take care of the procurement for the whole network.

Stakeholder mapping

The stakeholder group in this research is SMEs seeking internationalization but it is quite large group with companies in different industries or phases of internationalization. To narrow the stakeholder group down, and to plan the communication activities, the Team Finland network's stakeholders should be mapped and specific messages should be planned. After the stakeholder groups have been identified – maybe according to the different service areas – the communication planning becomes easier, and specific messages can be formed. This way the different network organizations are addressing the right stakeholder groups, and Team Finland message would remain aligned. Stakeholder mapping would also reduce the possible overlaps the different newsletters have.

Team Finland newsletter

To increase the general awareness of the Team Finland network and the services it provides, the network would benefit from one newsletter which would cover Team Finland related issues in more general level. Team Finland network has also several other stakeholder groups if the network's two other priorities (promoting country brand and attracting foreign investments to Finland) are also considered. At the moment it is not possible to follow Team Finland related issues in one newsletter and therefore a general Team Finland newsletter would be a good addition to Team Finland network's stakeholder communication channels. The target groups for this general newsletter would be e.g. politicians, municipalities, provinces, media etc. These stakeholder groups should also be mapped. The newsletter would be published e.g. 6 times / year – 3 times in spring and 3 times during fall. The themes for this newsletter should be planned for the coming year, and the next two newsletters should be planned in more detail.

As the general newsletter requires combining information from different organizations, the newsdesk should be responsible for planning and compiling of the general Team Finland newsletter.

Visual identity for different service areas

Currently the newsletters have the visual identity of the publishing organization. As the services they provide are part of Team Finland network's services, the newsletters should have strong visual linkage to Team Finland and thus fall under the Team Finland brand.

The Team Finland network services have been categorized into six different groups and all of the newsletters under certain category e.g. Market opportunities should have the same visual layout. This would make the receiver of the newsletter – the Team Finland stakeholder – understand that the services he/she is interested in are a part of a larger offering. This would also support the idea of combined service range aimed when forming of the network.

Newsdesk provides stories to different service area organizations

The newsdesk would be responsible for providing 1 to 2 articles per month per service area. These articles would present Team Finland related issued in more general level. The stories, blogposts, news, whatever form the articles would take, are published in team.finland.fi-website under each service area's news feed. The articles are then forwarded to different organizations for them to publish them in their own newsletters. This way there is also natural traffic from the newsletters to the team.finland.fi-website. This would create awareness of the whole network and its services.

To subscribe newsletters from Team Finland website

The subscribing of Team Finland related newsletters is at the moment difficult. Newsletters can be subscribed by visiting every organization's website individually. To make it easier for the Team Finland stakeholders to subscribe the newsletters, a subscription form should be added to team.finland.fi-website. The form should be structured so that the stakeholder wanting to subscribe a newsletter does not need to know which organizations' newsletter he wants to receive, but he could choose from the topics he/she is interested in.

Newsdesk workshop

A workshop should be arranged in late-spring 2016 for the newly appointed newsdesk. The topics covered in the workshop would be Team Finland stakeholder mapping, Team Finland key messages for the newsletters and themes for the general newsletter and the articles provided for the organizations. The workshop would also discuss of the new ways of cooperation between the different Team Finland organizations which will move into the Team Finland house in the fall 2016.

Conclusions

These preliminary suggestions are some ideas which the researcher saw as possible ways to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters. The network organization is still evolving, and it seems that the organizations are mainly focusing on their own organization instead of the network organization, and defending their own fields of operations, as stated in the Government Resolution on the Action Plan on External Economic Relations in 2012, these suggestions would be something that the organizations could do without any major changes.

These preliminary suggestions would increase the awareness of the network and the services it offers among the definitive stakeholder group of the network, SMEs seeking internationalization. The communication would also become more effective after the stakeholders are mapped and analyzed. Resources could be also saved if a common newsletter tool for the whole network is acquired.

4.7 Improvement ideas from the workshop

This subchapter presents the improvement ideas gained from the workshop and conclusions. As a part of the workshop, the survey results, the results from the newsletter analysis, and the preliminary suggestions were presented to the participants to direct their thinking towards the issue at hand.

The one of the topics in the workshop which was organized in May 2016 was to address the research question 3: "How to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the newsletters?" The workshop also covered two other topics (Appendix 3). The preliminary idea was that the workshop would have participants from the newly formed newsdesk but since the nomination process is still underway, it was agreed that the participants would include those who belong to the group of communications officers who take part in the network's communication meetings. The invitation to attend the workshop was sent to all of the network's organizations.

The workshop had altogether eight participants from Tekes, Finnvera, Finpro, UM, TEM, and VNK. The number of participants was ideal since the representation included most of the organizations moving into the Team Finland house in fall, and it allowed an open atmosphere for ideation. The workshop had also two additional Team Finland related topics which were discussed, but the results of those discussions do not fall into the scope of this thesis, and therefore those findings are not presented here.

The workshop resulted two measures which are to be implemented in the network's newsletters beginning from August 2016. It was agreed that each newsletter should have an upper or lower banner which would indicate that the organization is a part of the Team Finland network and some information about the services the network offers. The other idea to be implemented is that each newsletter should also include the Team Finland service number and a link to the contact request form. The Team Finland network has a joint contact request form and by filling the form, a company seeking internationalization services is provided with an expert who is able to serve to company's needs the best. (Team Finland 2016a.)

Further development ideas included a shared content pool which would include e.g. success stories, videos, current news from different Team Finland organizations, and information about the network's services. This pool would enable greater publicity for the different content produced in the Team Finland organizations and create awareness of the whole network and the services it provides. Other further development idea was that the newsletters should be categorized by different industries and to better utilize the Market Opportunities service provided by the Team Finland network. The time frame for these improvement ideas was not agreed during the workshop but the ideas are presented to the executive group of communication directors in June 2016.

The workshop also discussed that Team Finland should be taken into consideration early on when planning the content of the newsletters and the news angle in the newsletters should be that of the issue at hand and not the issuing organization.

Conclusions

The workshop shed some light on to the third research question of this thesis: "How to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in different newsletters?" It became obvious that the steps which the different organizations are able to take to improve the implementation of the stakeholder communication are mainly technical solutions. The organizations would prefer if Team Finland communication team would provide the joint material to the newsletters. It was discussed that it would be useful to cross link material from different organizations, and thus gain more visibility for the good content the network produces and that the produced content e.g. the cases could be used in different channels.

During the course of the workshop, it became obvious that the Team Finland network stakeholder communication would probably benefit more if the different newsletters were categorized by the different industries rather than by the service areas. The industries in question here are more or less the same as the thematic priorities defined in the Team Finland strategy, e.g. cleantech, bioeconomy, ICT, education, life sciences etc. (VNK 2013, 11; VNK 2014, 14). The joint material should also be prepared keeping this in mind and combine the industry thinking together with the different services the network is offering.

5 Findings

In this chapter, the findings of this research are presented.

5.1 Corporate communication and stakeholder communication

The survey results indicate that the target groups of the different newsletters are aligned with the stakeholder group of the Team Finland network, the SMEs seeking internationalization. According to the survey results, the newsletters contain Team Finland related stories and disseminate information regarding the organization's Team Finland services. This notion was supported by the analysis of the newsletters. The main finding here is that although organizations publish Team Finland related stories in their newsletters or the newsletters contain information about Team Finland services, they are not presented as part of a wider range of Team Finland network's services. They are presented as the services of the particular organization. The Team Finland related content in the newsletters does not create awareness of the network as a whole and the communication guidelines of the network are not followed.

It was agreed in the workshop that the idea of categorizing the newsletters according to the different industries (thematic priorities of the network) should be further investigated. This would then enable more targeted communication. The workshop did not directly discuss the stakeholder mapping but the categorizing idea is one step forward in providing better corporate and stakeholder communication.

5.2 Newsletters

According to the survey results, less than half of the newsletters are planned and nearly half of them are not planned at all. This became obvious also in the analysis of the newsletters. E.g. the number of individual stories in the newsletters varying from 1 to 25 is a clear indication that the content is not planned. The survey results also convey that the organizations have hard time in deciding what to publish due to the lack of stories or overflow of stories which indicates that the content of the newsletters is random and not planned at all.

The newsletters are produced mainly by the communication departments / units of the organization. The stories are also written by the members of communication departments / units. Other writers are experts, other staff and program leaders. Most of the stories in the newsletters are previously published material, e.g. blogs, press releases, news in the website. This notion was also supported by the analysis of the newsletters. As the newsletters are produced mainly by the communications officers within one organization there is no real cooperation in the communication activities within the network organization. The lack of cooperation in the production of the newsletters became also obvious in the workshop.

The workshop made a suggestion that a content pool should be set up. The timeframe for this improvement idea was not set. The joint content pool would enable organizations to use Team Finland content created by the other network organizations in their own newsletters, and thus improve the implementation of stakeholder communication of the Team Finland network. The results from the workshop support the preliminary suggestion of joint material published for the use of all of the network organizations. As the newsdesk has not yet been appointed, the task was seen as one belonging to the scope of the Team Finland communication team in the Prime Minister's Office.

Most of the newsletters are created by using a newsletter tool. The number of different tools used was six. The use of newsletter tool also became obvious in the analysis of the newsletters. The analysed newsletters had a recognizable structured layout and pictures are used. They also seem to use the graphical guidelines of the organization in question. The workshop did not address the issue of common newsletter tool but as the Government has stated in its updated Strategic Government Programme Action Plan that cost savings in external communication should be reached the preliminary suggestion made by the researcher has still grounds (VNK 2016, 13). The network's communications guidelines also state that joint communications tools should be created (Team Finland 2016b).

The workshop shortly discussed the idea of a common newsletter for the Team Finland network but it was seen that the current newsletters were a good starting point to improve the stakeholder communication. It can be said that Kauppapolitiikka magazine is the Team Finland network's magazine, and thus the newsletter which promotes the magazine's content could be seen as a Team Finland newsletter to a wider audience. The workshop did not address the two preliminary suggestions made by the researcher: the visual identity or the integrated subscription of the newsletters.

5.3 Summary

This research together with the results of the SME Barometer 2015 indicate that although Team Finland has been on several governments' agenda it has not yet fully been implemented into the network organizations' communications, and therefore the important stakeholder groups are not aware of the network as a whole and the services it provides. The different organizations present their own Team Finland services but do not present them as part of a myriad of internationalization services the network organizations together provide.

Corporate communication aims at fulfilling the organizational objectives (van Riel & Fombrun 2007, 22). The Government has set up clear objectives for the network – main objective being that the different services are presented as a wider array of Team Finland services. The network's corporate communication activities do not at the moment aim at fulfilling the organizational objectives.

It can be said that a newsletter is a part of the Team Finland network organizations' corporate communication tool-set. The network as a whole is not that well known among its stakeholders and thus the informational strategy in this context still applies. Newsletters create awareness of the network if they are planned and the Team Finland key messages defined in the network's communications guidelines are utilized.

Corporate communication also aims at creating and maintaining favourable reputations among its stakeholders (Cornelissen 2014, 5). The Team Finland newsletters are a good official channel since they have quite a lot of potential readers. Newsletters should offer the subscribers meaningful content that they can use to benefit in their operations.

According to Cornelissen (2014, 7) the stakeholder communication should provide the stakeholders information about company's operations. As this thesis comprehends Team Finland network as an organization, it can be said that the stakeholders are not presented a holistic view of the network and the services it offers. It should be understood that the end customer of one organization might need the other network organization's services as well, and therefore the network as a whole should be present in the individual newsletters, and in all communication directed to the SMEs seeking internationalization. The Team Finland network's stakeholder communication would benefit from a holistic customer orientation. It is one of the founding ideas of the whole network, and it would benefit both the network's organizations and its stakeholders.

In light of this research, the Team Finland network would benefit from a thorough stakeholder analysis as the chosen stakeholder group of this thesis, the SMEs seeking internationalization, is a large group and contains enterprises representing several industries. After the analysis, the different stakeholder groups could be mapped by using either the stakeholder salience model or the power-interest matrix to further plan the communication activities, and e.g. the content of the newsletters. This should be done in cooperation bearing in mind that the network organizations are not communicating about the network alone but as a part of a bigger entity.

One of the findings of this research is that the Team Finland network does not hold all of the four characteristics – flexible, team-based, flat, and use ICT – that Conrad & Poole (2012, 206–207) have found in most of the network organizations. It can be said that this is due to the fact that the organizations are state-funded, and a network is seen as a new way of organizing in the public sector. Organizations seem to be reluctant to take the Team Finland network’s goal as one of their goals and understand what their part is in reaching the overall network mission.

One of the reasons behind the fact that the network has not yet reached to its full potential has to do with the resistance to change which became obvious during this research process. The network organization has utilized several measures to overcome the resistance of change as suggested by Kotter and Schlesinger (2008, 134–145), e.g. education and communication; participation and involvement; and facilitation and support. There are the Communications officers’ meetings in which the communication related topics are discussed and decided. Those meetings create the possibility to participate and be involved in the planning of the communication activities, and the Team Finland Communication Team is there to help in the facilitation and gives support to the network as a whole. The network also has the intranet where information regarding the communication and its implementation are shared within the network. Although there are several measures which have been taken into action to overcome the resistance of change within the Team Finland network, the activity level of some of the organizations is not high, and therefore the network has not reached to its full potential. These measures have not created the high level of trust needed in a network organization for it to function effectively.

Team Finland network’s internal stakeholder communication plays a role in the network’s external stakeholder communication. Although the internal stakeholder communication was not a part of this thesis, it is something that cannot be overlooked. It is important that the communication experts are aware of the Team Finland strategies and objectives, and understand the issues the network organization is facing. As the focus of this thesis is in the newsletters, how they are produced, and how to improve the implementation of network’s external stakeholder communication, it is central that the communication officers from the network organizations are also involved in the planning of the corporate and stakeholder communication of the Team Finland network. This way the corporate communication is connected to what is already at the top of the network organization’s agenda (Steyn 2004, 182).

6 Conclusions

This chapter recaps the main research questions and how the research managed to answer to those questions and presents the revised suggestions shortly. At the end of this chapter, the researcher reflects on the whole research process.

Research questions were:

- How do the different network's organizations produce the newsletters?
- How do different newsletters present the Team Finland network and its services as a whole and show that the organization in question is a part of that network?
- How to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in the different newsletters?

Those questions were formed to find out if the preliminary propositions – the cooperation within the network has not yet reached its full potential and the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication should be improved in the different newsletters – had any grounds.

The first two research questions were addressed by the survey and the analysis of the newsletters. The third research question was addressed by the combination of analysis of the survey results, individual newsletter analysis, and the results from the workshop.

The newsletters are produced by the communication departments and most of them are created by using a newsletter tool. The production of the newsletters would benefit from a tighter coordination and cooperation with the other network organizations and a joint newsletter tool. According to Cornelissen (2014, 46), stakeholder communication provides information about the company's operations. This thesis comprehends the Team Finland network as an organization, and thus the stakeholder communication of the network would benefit from more holistic customer-oriented thinking. That way the myriad of services the network is providing would be presented as a meaningful entity for the end-customer – the SME seeking internationalization.

According to this research, the newsletters the Team Finland organizations are producing do not present the organizations or the services as being a part of the network. The content of the newsletters is in most of the cases is a combination of earlier published press releases, news items, blogs etc. During the workshop, it became clear that the main idea of most of the newsletters was to promote the existing material and be a secondary channel. As the idea behind the newsletters is to create awareness of the organization and its services (informational strategy) among the stakeholders, the content of the newsletters would benefit from more careful planning and accurate targeting and incorporating the

Team Finland Communications Guidelines in different organizations newsletters (Cornelissen 2014, 52).

The stakeholder communication is effective if the stakeholders are mapped and specific communication plans are made. The mapping and targeted communication does not mean that other stakeholder groups are forgotten. As it is with the thematic focus areas of the network defined in the Team Finland strategy (VNK 2013, 11) where the efforts are put in places which are most beneficial, the same applies in communication. It is better to have excellent stakeholder communication directed to analysed and mapped stakeholder groups, than it is to have mediocre communication to unknown publics.

The third research question proved to be hard to answer and find solutions which would be deployable as there still seems to be some resistance of change. The solutions which are implemented in connection with this research process, i.e. improvement ideas made in the workshop, are mainly short-term solutions which rely on technology or to the fact that "an outsider" meaning Team Finland communication team in the Prime Minister's Office provides the joint material. The workshop produced good ideas for further development but Team Finland and its communication should not be seen as something extra – it should be incorporated to the Team Finland network organizations' operations and strategies.

The Government holds the Team Finland network high in its agenda and sees it as an important element in the Government key project on entrepreneurship and employment. The services the network offers to the SMEs should be easily available and accessed. Also the current economic situation in Finland requires tighter coordination of the usage of public funds. The coordinated, thoroughly planned communication activities would reduce the overlaps and that way save resources and enable the network to focus on the issues which are important to it.

6.1 Updated suggestions

The researcher presented the preliminary suggestion to the participants of the workshop. Although the preliminary suggestions were not the topic of the workshop, the discussions which took place, enabled the researcher to evaluate most of the preliminary suggestions. As one of the preliminary suggestions was to organize the workshop, it is no longer presented. This subchapter presents the updated suggestions to improve the implementation of Team Finland stakeholder communication in different newsletters and revised arguments behind the suggestions.

Newsletter tool and visual identity

Team Finland network would benefit from one newsletter tool. In the long run, this would save resources as the procurement would be done jointly. The common tool would also enable joint visual identity and thus promote the Team Finland brand.

Stakeholder analysis

The SMEs seeking internationalization is a large stakeholder group, and contains enterprises representing various industries. The enterprises can also be in various phases of internationalization, and thus the communication should be planned more specifically to meet the needs of the stakeholders. The Team Finland stakeholder communication would benefit from thorough stakeholder analysis and mapping. This would reduce overlapping, produce planned communication activities and make the Team Finland brand stronger.

Joint article pool

Team Finland corporate and stakeholder communication would benefit from a joint article pool where the different materials published by the organizations could be used also in the other organizations publications. This would save resources and unify the communication.

Team Finland newsletter

The Team Finland network would benefit from the general newsletter which would be directed to a wider audience. This way the general knowledge of Team Finland network would grow and the Team Finland brand would be supported.

Integrated subscription

The subscription of the different newsletters should be integrated to team.finland.fi-website, and also to the network organization’s own websites. This way it would be easier to follow Team Finland related issues.

6.2 Reflection

This research process started already in September 2015 when I discussed about the possible thesis topic at my work place in the Prime Minister’s Office. The Team Finland Communication Team suggested this topic, and I decided to start working on the project. Now in May 2016, after more than eight months later, the Team Finland workshop was finally arranged, and the thesis is finalised.

When I started to work on the topic, I did not have a clear understanding of the Team Finland network or the services it provides, but during the process I learned a lot about the evolvement of the network, and the current status of the network. I also learned that the Government, in addition to the previous Governments, holds Team Finland network high in their agenda and reasons behind that.

At the beginning, I did not see all the obstacles which would be faced during the research process. The process proved to be a challenge since the network is still evolving, and as I was on a study leave, I was not following the Government's activities so closely. It also became to me as a surprise that the coordination task given to the Prime Minister's Office and the Team Finland Communication Team seems to be a difficult task since the different organizations due to several reasons cannot or will not incorporate the Team Finland network communication into their own communication strategies and guidelines.

The scope of this thesis was quite narrow, and to really improve Team Finland stakeholder communication requires a stronger cooperation and joint planning of the network's overall corporate communication and internal and external stakeholder communication. The forming of the Team Finland house in the fall 2016, could mark the beginning of tighter and more effective cooperation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The Team Finland survey

Team Finland -organisaatioiden uutiskirjeet

Hei!

Tervetuloa vastaamaan Team Finland -organisaatioiden uutiskirjeitä koskevaan kyselyyn.

Kysely on osa selvitystä, jolla pyrimme saamaan kattavan käsityksen asiakasviestinnästämme ja siitä, kuinka hyvin pystymme vastaamaan eri alojen asiakkaiden tiedontarpeisiin.

Kysely on lyhyt, joten toivomme, että vastaat siihen mitä pikimmiten. Vastausaikaa on tiistaihin 26. tammikuuta klo 16.15 asti. Jollet ole itse oikea ihminen vastaamaan kyselyyn, voit lähettää linkin tiimiläisellesi/tiimiläisillesi vastattavaksi. Jos vastuullenne kuuluu useampi kuin yksi uutiskirje, pyydän, että vastaatte kyselyyn jokaisen uutiskirjeen osalta erikseen.

Kiitos ajastasi!

Organisaatiosi

( ) valtioneuvoston kanslia
( ) työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö
( ) ulkoasiainministeriö
( ) opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö
( ) Finpro
( ) Tekes
( ) Finnvera
( ) Finnfund
( ) Finnpartnership
( ) Teollisuussijoitus
( ) VTT
( ) Patentti- ja rekisterihallitus
( ) Suomalais-Venäläinen kauppakamari
( ) Suomalais-ruotsalainen kauppakamari
( ) Ely-keskus
( ) Joku muu, mikä?

Valitse oma alueesi

( ) Etelä-Pohjanmaa
( ) Etelä-Savo
( ) Häme
( ) Kaakkois-Suomi
( ) Lappi
( ) Kainuu
( ) Keski-Suomi
( ) Pirkanmaa
( ) Pohjanmaa
( ) Pohjois-Karjala
( ) Pohjois-Pohjanmaa
( ) Pohjois-Savo

( ) Satakunta
( ) Uusimaa
( ) Varsinais-Suomi

Liittyykö uutiskirje johonkin Tekesin ohjelmaan?
Uutiskirje liittyy ohjelmaan, nimeä ohjelma.
Uutiskirje ei liity tiettyyn ohjelmaan vaan liittyy Tekesin muuhun toimintaan. Uutiskirjeen aihepiiri / teema.

Valitse kasvuohjelma

[ ] Beautiful Beijing
[ ] Cleantech Finland
[ ] Connectivity from Finland
[ ] Digital Hospitals
[ ] FinlandCare
[ ] Finland Maritime and Offshore
[ ] Food from Finland
[ ] Future Learning Finland
[ ] Future Learning Finland Gulf
[ ] Industrial Internet - Capitalise your Knowledge
[ ] Jätteestä energiaksi ja bioenergia
[ ] Kaivosteollisuuden kasvuohjelma
[ ] Luovimo
[ ] Mobility as a Service
[ ] Muoti- ja lifestyle-yritysten kasvuohjelma
[ ] Team Finland Health
[ ] Wood from Finland
[ ] Joku muu, mikä?
[ ] Taustalla ei ole kasvuohjelmaa. Uutiskirjeen aihepiiri / teema.

Uutiskirjeen nimi
Linkki uutiskirjeeseen tai sen tilaukseen
Kuinka usein uutiskirjeenne ilmestyy?

( ) Kerran viikossa
( ) Kerran kahdessa viikossa
( ) Kerran kuukaudessa
( ) Kerran kolmessa kuukaudessa
( ) Kaksi kertaa vuodessa
( ) Jokin muu, mikä?

Kuinka monta tilaajaa uutiskirjeellänne on?

( ) En tiedä kuinka monta tilaajaa uutiskirjeellämme on.
( ) Tilaajamäärä

Miten uutiskirjettä markkinoidaan?

[ ] Uutiskirjettä ei markkinoida.
[ ] Tilauslomake organisaatiomme verkkosivuilla.
[ ] Organisaatiomme sosiaalisen median kanavissa.
[ ] Uutisnosto verkkosivuillamme uutiskirjeen ilmestyessä.
[ ] Tietoa uutiskirjeestä organisaatiomme muissa julkaisuissa.
[ ] Suoramarkkinoinnilla asiakkaillemme.
[ ] Tilaisuudet, tapahtumat, seminaarit, ym.
[ ] Muulla tavalla, miten?

Mitkä ovat uutiskirjeenne kolme tärkeintä kohderyhmää?

[ ] Kansainvälistymisestä kiinnostuneet yritykset
[ ] Kansainvälistymisen eri vaiheissa olevat yritykset
[ ] Kasvuohjelmassa / ohjelmassa mukana olevat yritykset
[ ] Team Finland -verkostoon kuuluvat organisaatiot
[ ] Media
[ ] Muut asiakkaat, mitkä?
[ ] Potentiaaliset asiakkaat, mitkä?
[ ] Muut sidosryhmät, mitkä?
[ ] Joku muu, mikä?

Kuka suunnittelee uutiskirjeiden sisällön?

[ ] Viestinnän edustaja
[ ] Uutiskirjeen toimituskunta
[ ] Sisältö muodostuu aiemmin julkaistuista uutisista
[ ] Joku muu organisaatiostamme, kuka?
[ ] Viestintäpalveluja tarjoava yritys, mikä?
[ ] Joku muu, kuka?

Kuinka pitkälle eteenpäin uutiskirjeiden sisällöt on suunniteltu?

( ) Seuraava uutiskirje
( ) Seuraavat kaksi uutiskirjettä
( ) Lähikuukausien uutiskirjeet
( ) Koko vuoden uutiskirjeet
( ) Sisältöä ei ole suunniteltu eteenpäin.
( ) Jokin muu, mikä?

Mitkä ovat uutiskirjeenne pääaiheita?

[ ] Yleistä toimialaltamme
[ ] Oman organisaatiomme uutiset ja tapahtumat
[ ] Team Finland -verkoston uutiset
[ ] Tietoa ja vinkkejä yritysten kansainvälistymiseen, ml. tietoa palveluistamme
[ ] Tietoa ohjelmamme tapahtumista
[ ] Parhaat käytännöt /menestystarinat
[ ] Matkakertomuksia
[ ] Jokin muu, mikä?

Kuinka se, että olette osa Team Finland -verkostoa näkyy uutiskirjeessänne?

[ ] Team Finland ei korostu uutiskirjeessämme.
[ ] Julkaisemme Team Finland -aiheisia juttuja.
[ ] Kerromme Team Finland -palveluistamme.
[ ] Kerromme muiden Team Finland -organisaatioiden tarjoamista palveluista.
[ ] Käytämme Team Finlandin graafista ilmettä.
[ ] Jollain muulla tavalla, miten?

Kuka kirjoittaa uutiskirjeen artikkelit?

[ ] Sisältö koostuu aiemmin julkaistuista uutisista.
[ ] Viestinnän edustaja
[ ] Freelancer
[ ] Viestintäpalveluja tarjoava yritys, mikä?

[ ] Joku muu omasta organisaatiosta, kuka?
[ ] Joku muu, kuka?

Mistä hankitte uutiskirjeessä käytettävät valokuvat tai muun graafisen materiaalin (kuten taulukot tms.)?

( ) Emme käytä kuvia tai muuta grafiikkaa uutiskirjeessämme.
( ) Käytämme organisaatiomme kuvapankkia/materiaalipankkia.
( ) Tilaamme yksittäisiä kuvia/graafisia elementtejä talon omalta valokuvaajalta/graafikolta tarpeen mukaan.
( ) Ostamme yksittäisiä kuvia kuvapankeista/materiaalipankeista tarpeen mukaan, mistä?
( ) Tilaamme yksittäisiä kuvia/graafisia elementtejä talon ulkopuoliselta valokuvaajalta/graafikolta tarpeen mukaan, mistä?
( ) Hankimme kuvat/graafiset elementit muulla tavoin, miten?

Lisätietoa kuvien hankintaan ja käyttöön liittyen

Kuka tilaa uutiskirjeen artikkelit ja kuvat?

( ) Viestinnän edustaja
( ) Viestintäpalveluja tarjoava yritys, mikä?
( ) Joku muu omasta organisaatiosta, kuka?
( ) Joku muu, kuka?

Kuka kokoaa uutiskirjeen materiaalit?

[ ] Viestinnän edustaja
[ ] Viestintäpalveluja tarjoava yritys, mikä?
[ ] Joku muu omasta organisaatiosta, kuka?
[ ] Joku muu, kuka?

Käytättekö jotain uutiskirjetyökalua uutiskirjeenne kokoamisessa ja lähettämisessä?

( ) Uutiskirjetyökalu ei käytössä.
( ) Uutiskirjetoiminto on liitetty verkkojulkaisujärjestelmämme yhteyteen.
( ) Uutiskirjetyökalu käytössä, nimi?

Kuinka kokoatte uutiskirjeenne?

Kuinka lähetätte uutiskirjeenne?

Millaisia haasteita olette kohdanneet uutiskirjettä tehdessänne?

[ ] Juttuideoiden puute
[ ] Juttuideoiden ylitarjonta
[ ] Vaikeus päättää, mitä kirjeeseen valitaan mukaan
[ ] Hankaluus löytää jutuille kirjoittaja
[ ] Kirjoittajat eivät sitoudu aikatauluihin
[ ] Uutiskirjeen tekemisen vastuut eivät ole selvät
[ ] Uutiskirje ei tavoita oikeita kohderyhmiä
[ ] Uutiskirje ilmestyy liian usein
[ ] Uutiskirje ilmestyy liian harvoin
[ ] Muu haaste, mikä?

Mikä oli edellisen uutiskirjeenne luetuin juttu?

[ ] Meillä ei ole tätä tietoa.

[ ] Linkki uutiskirjeeseen ja juttuun
[ ] Jutun otsikko tai aihe

Mikä oli edellisen uutiskirjeenne vähiten luettu juttu?

[ ] Meillä ei ole tätä tietoa.
[ ] Linkki uutiskirjeeseen ja juttuun
[ ] Jutun otsikko tai aihe

Onko uutiskirjeestä tehty lukijatutkimusta?

( ) Kyllä
( ) Ei

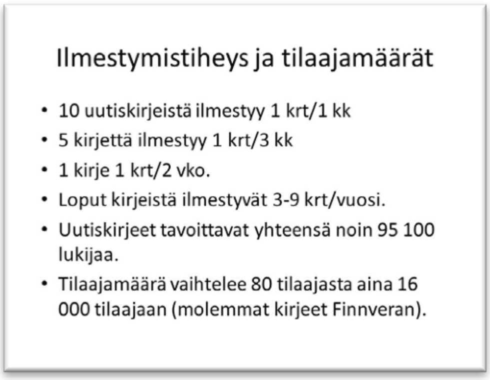
Milloin tutkimus on tehty?
Kuka teki tutkimuksen?

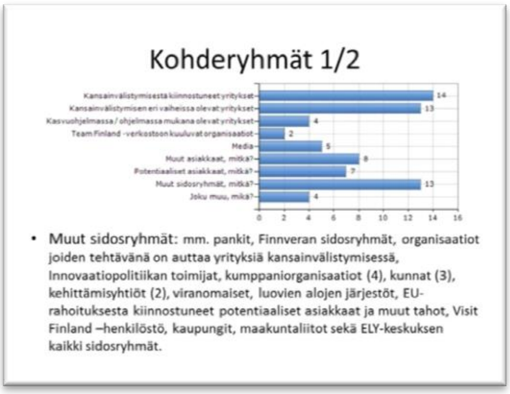
Onko tutkimuksen tulokset vielä saatavilla?

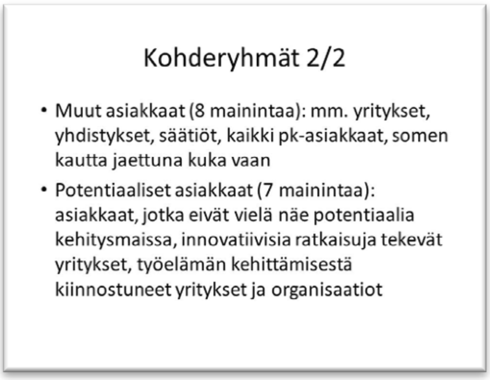
( ) Kyllä
( ) Ei

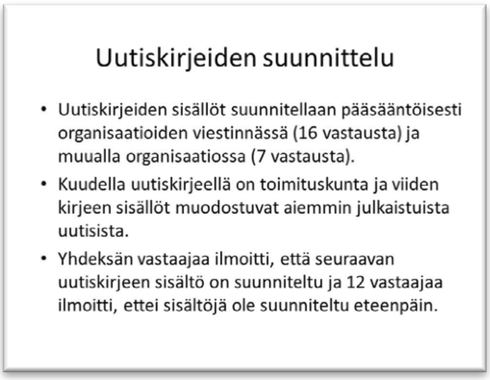
Kuinka parantaisit uutiskirjettänne vastaamaan paremmin kohderyhmienne tarpeita? (Esim. sisältöön, työtapaan tai julkaisutiheyteen liittyvät muutokset. Ole konkreettinen ehdotuksissasi.)

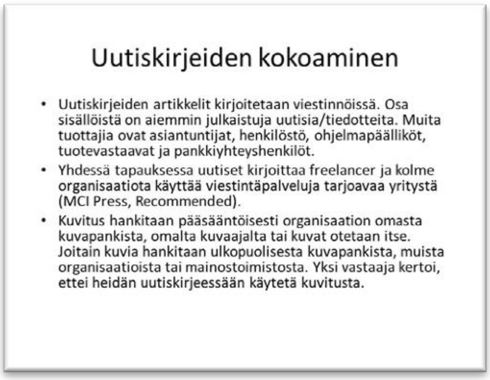
Appendix 2. Presentation of the survey and the newsletter analysis results and the preliminary suggestions

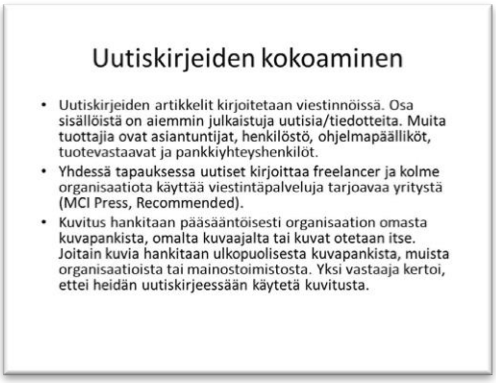




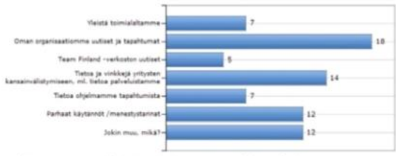








Uutiskirjeiden pääsisällöt



- Jokin muu: esim. käytännön tietoutta pankkeja koskevista muutoksista/uudistuksista; uutiset, liiketoimintamahdollisuudet, tapahtumat; Kauppapolitiikka-lehden artikkelit: taloudelliset ulkosuhteet; jos kiinnostuit asiasta, kuka auttaa ja mistä lisätietoa; ajankohtaiset uutiset toimintakentästämme, myös TF jos on jotain ajankohtaista tai valtakunnallista uutista tarjolla; ohjelman uutiset ja tapahtumat (5 mainintaa); kaikki EU-rahoitukseen liittyvä, suomalaisia kiinnostava tieto.

Seuranta

- 10 vastaajaa ilmoitti, että heillä on tiedossa mikä on uutiskirjeen luetuin ja vähiten luetuin juttu
- 13 vastaajaa ilmoitti, ettei heillä ole tätä tietoa
- Lukijatutkimus tehty yhdestä uutiskirjeestä

Uutiskirjetyökalu

- Käytössä suurimmassa osassa organisaatioista.
- Eri työkaluista käytössä:
  - Emaileri, webEdition, Marketing Cloud
  - Campaign Monitor (3)
  - Postiviidakko (8)
  - Mainostoimisto SST:n järjestelmä (4)
- Yhden uutiskirjeen koostamisesta vastaa viestintäpalveluja tarjoava yritys ja yhdessä organisaatiossa uutiskirjetyökalu on integroitu verkkojulkaisujärjestelmään.

Haasteet

- Muu haaste: kanava kutsuille mutta vaikka kirje menee joka kuukausi usein tulee kutsuja niin lyhyellä varoajalla että emme ehdi julkaista, viestinnässä ei riitä aikaa muistuttaa asiantuntijoita jutuista ja laatia itse uutiskirje, välillä aiheita on liikaa, tekninen toteutus vaikeutui, kun siirryimme Finpron järjestelmiin

Uutiskirjeiden analyysi

- 29 uutiskirjettä, joulukuu 2015
- 1-25 juttua (uutisia toimialalta, tapahtumakalenteri, alueellisia uutisia)
- 13 uutiskirjeessä joko TF-aiheinen juttu tai linkki TF-verkkosivuille

Vastaajien kehittämisideat 1/2

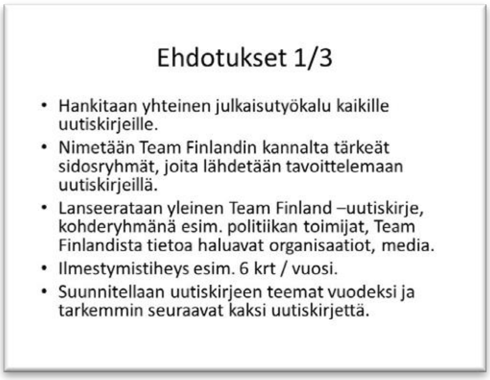
- Räätälöinti kohderyhmittäin, uusien mahdollisuuksien hyödyntäminen ominaisuuksissa
- Kasvattamalla tilaajamäärää ja tarjoamalla kohderyhmämme kannalta mielenkiintoisia näkökulmia aiheisiin.
- Asiantuntijoiden pitäisi olla enemmän kiinnostuneita tuottamaan juttuja ja kolumneja uutiskirjeeseen, koska muuten on vaikeata pelkästään viestinnän voimin saada mielenkiintoisia ja huomionarvoisia juttuja, koska me viestinnässä emme ole suorassa asiakastyössä.
- Uutiskirje -kanava tunnetuksi asiantuntijoille, vuosisuunnitelma aiheista ja julkaisuajankohdista
- Suunnitelmallisuutta tulee lisätä
- Yrityksiä palvelevien kansainvälistä liiketoimintaa ja bisnesmahdollisuuksia sisältävien sisältöjen tuottaminen yhä kohdennetummin ja asiakastarpeisiin vastaten (ytimessä yritykset ja bisnes)
- Parantaisin ja suunnittelisin pidemmälle uutisaiheita, mutta toisaalta ne ovat ajankohtaiskatsaus, eikä siis kovin pitkälle suunniteltavissa.
- Julkaisujen erottuvuus muista saman alan tarjoamista.
- Kolmen ohjelman yhteinen uutiskirje on liian laaja kohderyhmiä ajatellen.

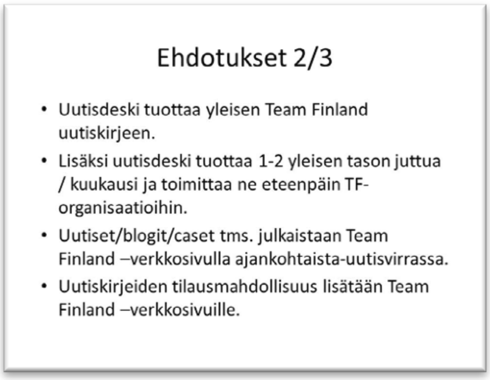
Vastaajien kehittämisideat 2/2

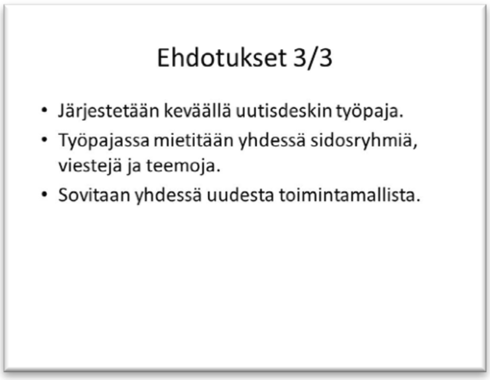
- Kirjeen vastaanottajille pitäisi pystyä lähettämään tasan tarkkaan heidän kiinnostustaan vastaavan aihepiirin kirje. Tällä hetkellä se ei ole mahdollista järjestelmässämme. ÄÄRIMMÄISEN TÄRKEÄÄ on kerätä riittävä määrä dataa jo tilauslomakkeella (mm. yritys vai t-laitos tai muu, jos mahd. yrityksen koko, titteli jne.) ja tarjota lomakkeen muokkausmahdollisuus suoraan linkin kautta ILMAN rekisteröimistä, mikä kirjeessämme onkin aina ollut.
- Kohderyhmämme kaipaa luotettavaa, ajantasaista ja ymmärrettävää (vs. komission oma uutisointi) suomenkielistä uutisointia EU-rahoitukseen liittyvistä asioista. Haasteena on se, että lukijakunnassa on paljon vasta-alkajia mutta myös todella syvällisiä osaajia, ja tuotettavan materiaalin pitää palvella molempia. Seuraamme jatkuvasti palautetta ja yritämme parantaa prosessia sen mukaan.
- Mielestäni uutiskirjeemme toimii hyvin siinä, että kaikki voivat osallistua uutiskirjeen sisältöön ja on yksi henkilö, jolla on koordinointivastuu. Meillä oli aiemmin ns. toimitusneuvosto, joka oli tässä tilanteessa aivan turha, vei aikaa ja tuli ihan turhia vääntöjä. Julkaisutiheyskin on avoin eli vähintään kerran kuussa, mutta tilanteen mukaan voimme lähettää useampiakin uutiskirjeitä kuukaudessa. Voisimme jossain tilanteissa harkita enemmänkin kohdennettua viestintää, tätä toki teemmekin välillä, esim. tapahtumiin liittyen. Suurin ongelma meillä on tekninen toteutus Finpro-ympäristössä. Muuten konsepti tuntuu toimivalle.

Uutiskirjeiden plussat ja miinukset

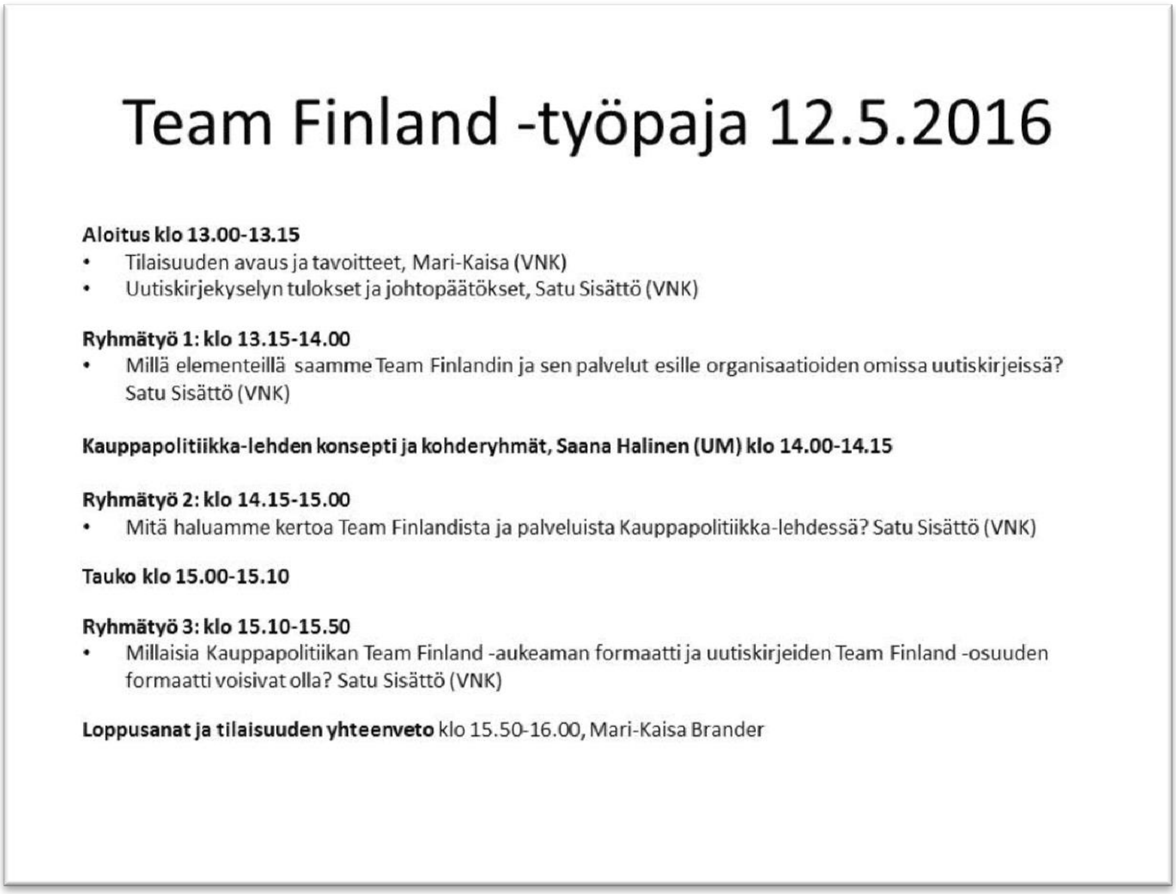
- Plussat
  - Yhtenäinen ilme oman organisaation uutiskirjeissä
  - Tunnistettava rakenne
  - Kuvien käyttö
- Miinukset
  - Team Finland ei tule esille uutiskirjeissä
  - Uutiskirjeiden kohderyhmä kateissa (sisäinen/ulkoinen)
  - Juttujen määrä (1-25 kpl)
  - Suunnitelmallisuuden puute
  - Uutiskirjeen otsikko ei innosta avaamaan uutiskirjettä
  - Juttujen otsikot eivät erotu, "ingressit" eivät innosta lukemaan eteenpäin, sekava rakenne
  - Kuvakoot vaihtelevat


Ehdotukset 1/3
• Hankitaan yhteinen julkaisutyökalu kaikille uutiskirjeille.
• Nimetään Team Finlandin kannalta tärkeät sidosryhmät, joita lähdetään tavoittelemaan uutiskirjeillä.
• Lanseerataan yleinen Team Finland –uutiskirje, kohderyhmänä esim. politiikan toimijat, Team Finlandista tietoa haluavat organisaatiot, media.
• Ilmestymistiheys esim. 6 krt / vuosi.
• Suunnitellaan uutiskirjeen teemat vuodeksi ja tarkemmin seuraavat kaksi uutiskirjettä.


Ehdotukset 2/3
• Uutisdeski tuottaa yleisen Team Finland uutiskirjeen.
• Lisäksi uutisdeski tuottaa 1-2 yleisen tason juttua / kuukausi ja toimittaa ne eteenpäin TF-organisaatioihin.
• Uutiset/blogit/caset tms. julkaistaan Team Finland –verkkosivulla ajankohtaista-uutisvirrassa.
• Uutiskirjeiden tilausmahdollisuus lisätään Team Finland –verkkosivuille.


Ehdotukset 3/3
• Järjestetään keväällä uutisdeskin työpaja.
• Työpajassa mietitään yhdessä sidosryhmiä, viestejä ja teemoja.
• Sovitaan yhdessä uudesta toimintamallista.

Appendix 3. The agenda of the workshop arranged in 12 May 2016.



Team Finland -työpaja 12.5.2016

Aloitus klo 13.00-13.15
- Tilaisuuden avaus ja tavoitteet, Mari-Kaisa (VNK)
- Uutiskirjekyselyn tulokset ja johtopäätökset, Satu Sisättö (VNK)

Ryhmätyö 1: klo 13.15-14.00
- Millä elementeillä saamme Team Finlandin ja sen palvelut esille organisaatioiden omissa uutiskirjeissä? Satu Sisättö (VNK)

Kauppapolitiikka-lehden konsepti ja kohderyhmät, Saana Halinen (UM) klo 14.00-14.15

Ryhmätyö 2: klo 14.15-15.00
- Mitä haluamme kertoa Team Finlandista ja palveluista Kauppapolitiikka-lehdessä? Satu Sisättö (VNK)

Tauko klo 15.00-15.10

Ryhmätyö 3: klo 15.10-15.50
- Millaisia Kauppapolitiikan Team Finland -aukeaman formaatti ja uutiskirjeiden Team Finland -osuuden formaatti voisivat olla? Satu Sisättö (VNK)

Loppusanat ja tilaisuuden yhteenveto klo 15.50-16.00, Mari-Kaisa Brander